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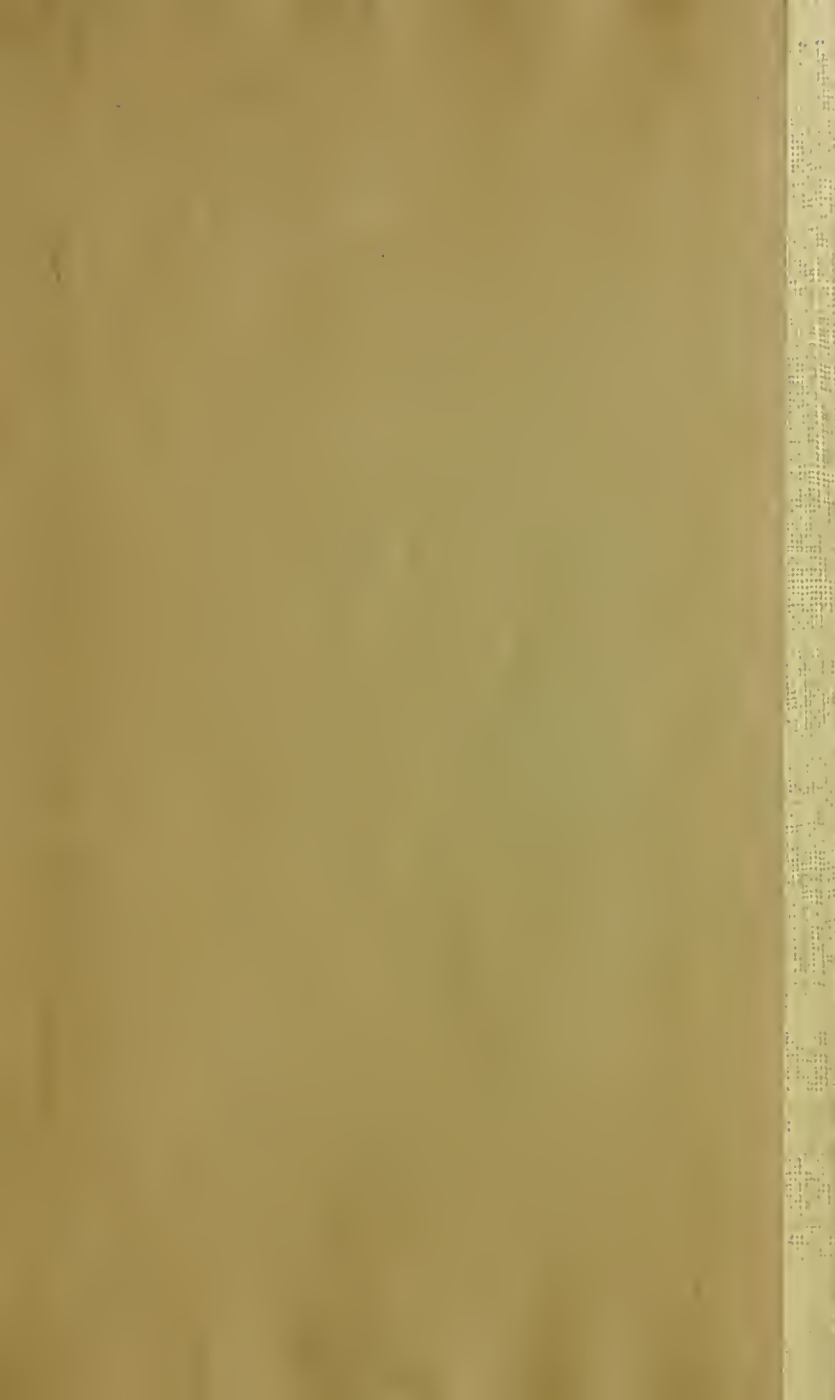


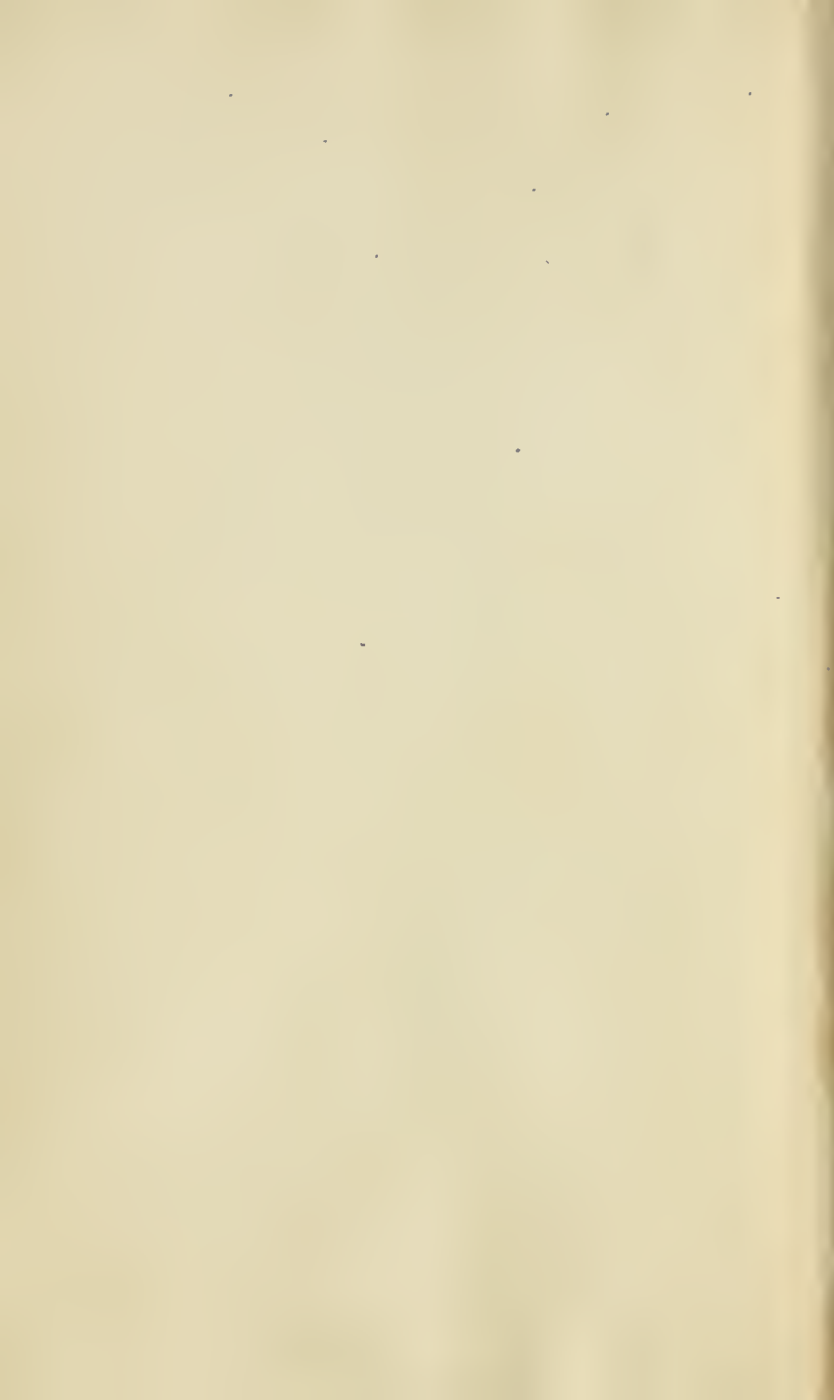
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Daily Steps towards Heaven.

Pudney & Russell, Printers, 79 John-Street.

Atcland, Arthur Henry Duke,
Daily Steps towards Heaven;

OR,

PRACTICAL THOUGHTS ON THE GOSPEL HISTORY,

AND ESPECIALLY ON

THE LIFE AND TEACHING

OF

Our Lord Jesus Christ.

FOR EVERY DAY IN THE YEAR, ACCORDING TO THE
CHRISTIAN SEASONS.

WITH
TITLES AND CHARACTERS OF CHRIST;

AND A HARMONY OF THE FOUR GOSPELS.

FIRST AMERICAN EDITION REVISED, FROM THE THIRD
LONDON EDITION.

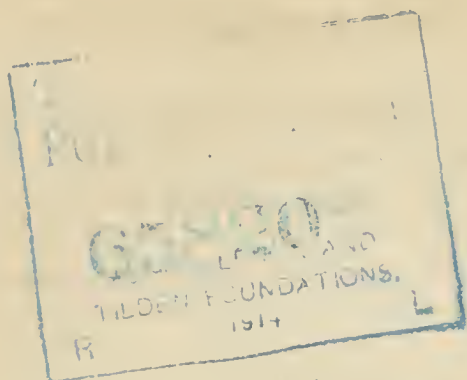
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“THE SACRED BOOKS OF SCRIPTURE, BEARING THE
STAMP AND WITNESS OF THEIR DIVINE ORIGIN, ARE
STEPS BY WHICH WE MAY MOUNT TO GOD.”

Notice to the Third Edition.

THE continued acceptance of this little work, now corrected throughout, as far as the Editor has been able to discover the errors, of which he regrets the existenee in the two former Editions, calls for his renewed thanks for what he esteems a great favour from God his Father and his Christian brethren. He has made too free, yet incomplete, an use of the labours of others, to attribute this to his own share in the work. But he has a better hope concerning it. The first sight he had of the original work convinced him that God had cast in his way an opportunity of putting before himself, and ultimately, perhaps, before others, the Life of his Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ—His doctrines! His work, and its attendant circumstances in the Gospel history—in a form likely to be of daily practical use. Moreover, he foresaw that he could bear a silent but real testimony to his reverence for the Word of God—that Word is Truth, and endureth for ever—and his firm conviction that in reading and searching its pages is one chief mode of communion with Him; oftentimes, in recalling its gracious words, an internal witness to the individual teaching of God The Spirit, his Sanctifier and Guide; and to humble, teachable, and faithful members of His Church, the safest as well as the highest source of meditation. Finding what he had never before met with—a work from which enough might be gathered

to further these blessed ends in unison with the thoughts and teaching of the Church, and free from all reasonable causes of offence, and seeing that it was not likely to be undertaken by other hands, he cast his daily notes and references to Holy Scripture on the blessing of God and the forbearance of his brethren, believing that they who used them as they had been, though most imperfectly, prepared, would not fail of the blessing he himself little deserved, but largely received. His hope is, that it has been accepted in the same spirit; and he is amply rewarded in the cordial acceptance of the volume by persons of very dissimilar opinions and callings in life. He desires no better thing for himself and them, than, that, while remembering the danger of "private interpretations," and the certainty of missing the spirit of the Bible, if we each try to bring its large and often incomprehensible meaning within our own narrow systems, we may, in a spirit of thankfulness for the teaching of the Church of Christ, so far as it is known to us, cast ourselves with confidence upon its pages and words—revere them, love them, speak in them, think in them, pray in them, as saints of God have done of old, that so, keeping His sayings, we may be prepared for the coming of our Lord (who knows how soon this may be! who can say that these times do not warn us to Watch!), and find them, as we much need in this day of doubt and strife, a lamp and a light, full of comfort, instruction, and peace.

NOTICE.

The work is divisible into four parts, as before, at Advent, Sexagesima, Trinity, and sixteenth Sunday after Trinity.

The fullest possible number of weeks and days being provided for, care should be taken not always to omit the closing parts of Christmas, Epiphany, and Trinity.

Titles and Characters of Christ follow, as before, at p. 405.

Tables of reference to subjects suitable to special occasions are at pp. 413-15.

The Harmony is at the end.

“Single acts of virtue, wrought by the grace of God, are the steps to heaven—whether inward, of penitence, or faith, or hope, or love breathed from the soul to God, . . . or outward, . . . of self-denying love, or peacemaking, or active service.”

“One step only is in our power : the next—pray we for the grace of God to do each single act as He shall will, to His glory ; and He will lead us whither as yet we know not.”

THE PATH OF THE JUST IS AS A SHINING LIGHT, WHICH SHINETH MORE AND MORE UNTO THE PERFECT DAY.

I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

It has been recorded of one much and justly beloved in his day, that in his last illness he accused himself of negligence in reading the histories of our Lord, and resolved, if restored to health, to give a portion of every day to the study of our Lord's character, and to the endeavour to ascertain, as far as possible, precisely what He (our Lord) would have said and done in every position in which he himself was placed. Not, indeed, that any who knew John Bowdler could believe that he neglected the means which from day to day appeared the best for his soul's health, and made him what he was to others. This would not be likely of one of whom a close observer of men has said, that his "interior life, if it could be faithfully written, would present a record which none could read without reverence, and few without self-reproach." But on a review of the past (and the religious circumstances of the times would in part account for it), there seemed open to his mind even yet this more excellent way. Of late years, it may be hoped, in every class of earnest religious persons, a kindred feeling has increased, and resulted in the desire to read and treasure up the words of holy Scripture for daily practical guidance, whether relating immediately to our Lord's personal example, or to the collateral histories which are recorded, either for our encouragement or warning, in the entire Gospels. All who are in earnest about the work of their salvation know the great necessity for feeding their souls upon the Word of God where the opportunity is

given, and the misery that results from the neglect of it. To read a little, with reflection, prayer, and practical self-application, is better than to read much without it, which, if of any, is of little profit. Such thoughts as are suggested in this book are not intended as readings in themselves, and are therefore often abrupt; but only as helps to reflection and meditation on the Bible reading of the day, where that is connected with the Gospel history. They ought to be accompanied, where there is time and opportunity, with consideration of the other parts of Scripture referred to. To use the whole in this manner might occupy considerable time; but it would be better to take a part only, and do so, than to read the whole, and keep the Bible closed. And, indeed, no greater calamity could well befall any than to put forth a work which would lead men from, instead of drawing them towards, those pages of revelation. However much they have been misused by men opposing their private judgment to the concurring testimony of the great Christian body, and building up divisions upon it, or however carelessly many may have read them, those blessed pages must ever be received by the faithful and humble, as among the greatest gifts that could have been bestowed by God on a fallen world.

Besides having in view the above object, the writer has known for many years that a want has been felt of some small manual, so arranged as to furnish suitable thoughts for every day in the year, according to the Christian seasons, for members of the Church of England. Knowing this, he could not but believe it to be providential that a Latin work

fell in the way of a friend, who first made him acquainted with it, of which one portion was very available for this purpose.¹ To that work all who profit in any way by this are, under the blessing of God, indebted for the general arrangement, for almost all the subjects, and by far the greater number of thoughts in the following pages; the work of the writer having been mainly to select from it, and, where the references to holy Scripture were incomplete, to seek for others, and add at the foot of each page some short text, which might during the day help to impress the whole on the mind. The subjects of the book are limited to the Gospel history; but this, indeed, is the centre of all, to which all else refers. Other parts of holy Scripture illustrate it, and, as far as space permitted, have been freely used in the references. Those who have leisure might with advantage search for more in that inexhaustible treasury.

In the use of all such religious exercises it seems considered well, if possible, to give the earliest morning thoughts to them (a habit greatly assisted by reading over the subject, where it is practicable, the evening before), and then, praying for the aid of the Holy Spirit of God, endeavour to realise or bring to mind the events and persons of which we read, and consider the lesson God intended to teach us by the narrative. By this we may test our own lives and conduct; and whether penitence or thanksgiv-

¹ For the Harmony, the writer is indebted to the labors of Gresswell and Townsend; and for a revision of all the quotations, as the work passed through the press, to the labor and love of another.

ing be the proper result, we should always endeavour to raise our affections towards God our Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, and form new resolutions, by His grace, to live more conformably with His will and His word. In so small a space as is allotted to each day in this book, it would have been impossible to express at length, if at all, the affections and resolutions which might be the fruit of such a consideration of holy Scripture as these pages are intended to help. Indeed, they were not expressed at full in the original work, probably from the consciousness of the author of that part of the work (intimated by him in the introduction to it), that they must to each person be the gift of God. Such sensible emotions are not in our own power; the Holy Spirit of God can alone enkindle them in any heart. If they are not always given, we should not be discouraged; when they are, we should welcome them, pour them forth again, and be thankful.

If the thoughts appear in some instances too severe and discouraging, it may be truly urged, that while meditation on the love of God in Christ to sinners is the true antidote to formality, so is the habit of practical self-inquiry, in some form, whatever it be called, an essential safeguard against a vague and mere general profession of religion. But still more safely it may be urged that the practical part of the Christian life, so especially needful to all in secular callings, is the daily struggle to conform to the will of God, to compare ourselves with His standard, to know and confess our guilt, and to set ourselves steadily on the work of amendment. It is the office of the Spirit of God, the "Comforter,"

to "reprove" and "convince;" and of the word of God to "pierce even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit," and to be "the discerners of the thoughts and intents of the heart." Except there be any to whom from the first dawn of infancy it has been granted to abide in Him, untainted by habitual or wilful sin, and filled with His Spirit and His love, the first step to all love of God is the fear of Him, and the consequent conviction of sin, self-condemnation and self-abasement which must follow in all who are led of the Spirit to true conversion of heart. Nor would it be safe to shrink from the knowledge of ourselves, or from this humbling comparison. These steps once gained, the balm is at hand. There are, indeed, many cases in which the work of penitence is long, and full of painful doubts and harassments, and far be it from any to say that this may not be in the end both the deepest and most abiding work. Yet to others the mercy of God has vouchsafed speedier consolation and peace, and earlier visions of His love. But of each it is true, that they who know themselves best, will desire to know Him most. To have any other refuge than the cross of Christ, is to have no shelter at all. They who have any real hope seek it here. This will, in His own good time, be found alike the stay of all; and the knowledge of Jesus, and communion with Him, will increase hour by hour to those that seek it, until the soul loses the remembrance of its own misery in the abiding sense of His presence and His love.

Notwithstanding the impression which he is prepared to believe the first opening of this book may

produce of stiffness and formality, the writer looks back with encouragement to the daily comfort and assistance which it has given him during several successive years. The certainty that the thoughts to which it may lead are not yet begun to be exhausted, gives him a hope that he may not have laboured, if it can be called labour, for himself or for others, in vain. The end of all meditation is to learn more of God, and to become more like Him; not to stand still, or merely to lament our deficiency, but to stir us up in earnest to renew the fight, in the strength of God, in hourly consciousness of the presence of Christ, and in the power of His Holy Spirit, and His holy Word. If only such works are used day by day, as this is intended, to lead to and not from the holy Scriptures, and in occasional moments of leisure to revive the recollection of them, he has no fear; for there, if any where, men will find the true picture of their own perverseness, ignorance, and waywardness, on the one side, and on the other all the encouraging and hope-giving truths which point to the love and care and aid of their Father, their Redeemer, and their Guide.

TO HIM ALONE BE GLORY.

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* An Annual Commemoration of the Blessings of the Holy Eucharist used to be observed for a week, beginning with the Festival of "Corpus Christi" on the Thursday after Trinity Sunday. This accounts for the insertion of the subject in this place.

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Prayers

For use before reading.

LET the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be always acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer.

Help me this day, O Lord,
But one step more to gain ;
Nor let me read Thy word,
Nor meditate, in vain.

The Lord's Prayer.

OUR Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation ; but deliver us from evil : for Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Collect.

BLESSED Lord, who hast caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning, grant that we may in such wise hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that by patience, and comfort of Thy holy Word, we may embrace, and

ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which Thou hast given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ; and mercifully grant that Thy Holy Spirit may in this, and in all things, direct and rule our hearts; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Collect

After the reading and meditation.

ALMIGHTY God, who hast given Thine only Son to be unto us both a sacrifice for sin, and also an ensample of godly life, give me grace that I may always most thankfully receive that His inestimable benefit, and also daily endeavour myself to follow the blessed steps of His most holy life; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

First Sunday in Advent.

OF THE ETERNAL GENERATION OF THE WORD.

Read S. John i. 1-18 (compare S. John xvii. 17, and xiv. 6).

I. *In the beginning was the Word.* Ib. 1.

CHRIST the Word; the express image of God; of one substance with the Father; God Himself; in whom all the perfections of the Godhead shine forth. We once His image: how fallen! Yet restored and preserved by grace, through faith, and the contemplation of Him. *Rom. ix. 5; 2 Pet. i. 2-4.*

II. *All things were made by Him.* Ib. 3.

Then all our dependence is on Him. With all creation let us praise Him. With Him I can do all things. How little have I done? Without Him, nothing! Let me take hold on Him, and take courage. *Phil. iv. 13; S. John xv. 5.*

III. *In Him was the life.* Ib. 4.

If our life is in Him, we should cleave less to His creatures, more to Himself. What life we have is from Him. Do we live the Divine life? What are our works? For what have I to give thanks? Of what to repent? 1 *S. John v. 11.*

Text.

Of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things; to whom be glory for ever and ever.
Rom. xi. 36.

For thoughts on the Gospel of the day, see pp. 96, 97.

OF THE CREATION AND END OF MAN.

Read Genesis i. 26, to ii. 7.

I. *God created man in His own image.* Gen. i. 27.

Acknowledge thy Creator; praise Him; thou art His; we have wandered from Him; He gave thee His image; compare thyself with it. *Eccles. vii. 29.*

II. *He formed man of the dust, &c.* Ib. ii. 7.

He gave an earthly body, with a noble spirit; the one for humility, the other for encouragement to seek higher than earthly objects; seek not things unworthy of that spirit; care not too much for the earthly body. *S. Matt. vi. 25.*

III. *Thou shalt worship, &c.* *S. Matt. iv. 10.*

This is the end of man; what we have of Him is His; how has it been abused; let me loathe the past; let me seek higher aims. Oh, that I could worthily praise God Himself, our end, our reward. *S. James i. 17, 18.*

Text.

Glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's. 1 Cor. vi. 20.

OF THE MEANS TO OBTAIN THAT END

Read Gen. i. to verse 26; Ps. viii.; Rom. i. 18-20.

I. *In the beginning, &c.* Gen. i. 1.

How many things for our use; yet we ungrateful, rebellious. Think of them: some natural; the heavens, earth, &c.; some supernatural; Christ, the holy Angels, the Scriptures, &c.; and what is prepared in heaven, if so much here? 1 Cor. iii. 21, &c.

II. *Thou hast put all things, &c.* Ps. viii. 6.

Think of the love, the liberality, the providence, wisdom, patience of God towards us; be also liberal in your service of Him, and penitent for the past. How little have I subjected myself to Him! S. Matt. x. 8; Rom. xii. 1.

III. *The invisible things, &c. are clearly seen.* Rom. i. 20.

What is the end of these means? for the body; its health, nourishment, clothing, &c.; for the soul, and understanding; their instruction, and the knowledge of God. How have they been used? let me beware lest they are taken away, and become my accusers. S. Matt. xxv. 28.

Text.

Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created. Rev. iv. 11.

OF THE GOOD USE OF GOD'S CREATURES, AND
INDIFFERENCE TO THEM.

Read Eccles. iii. or xi.

I. *God saw every thing that He had made, &c.*
Gen. i. 31.

All things made the best for the service of man; the use left to himself; even riches and poverty; and other contrary things (1 Cor. vii. 29-32); how used? for injury to God? to the creature? to thyself?

II. *Blessed is the man that hath set his hope in the Lord, and hath not lift up his mind unto vanity.*
Ps. xl. 5; xxiv. 4.

Each and every creature to be referred (in its use) to God; observing if it advances or hinders our end; if we seek in it God, or ourselves, or the world. (Amos v. 8; 1 Tim. vi. 17; Phil. ii. 21.) Which is my case?

III. *Turn not to the right hand nor to the left.*
Prov. iv. 27.

Are my affections equal towards riches and poverty, honour and shame, &c.? They conduce equally to the glory of God and our end; self-love must be rooted out; so as to hate pleasant things if they hinder, and love troubles if they profit, our salvation. 2 Cor. xii. 9, 10.

Text.

Whether, therefore, ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. 1 Cor. x. 31.

OF THE FALL OF MAN.

Read Gen. iii.; Ps. xiv.; Rom. v. 12.

I. *Man being in honour hath no understanding; but is, &c.* Ps. xlix. 20.

Think with regard to the casting forth of our first parent from Paradise, (1) his glorious condition and freedom from all evil; (2) his ingratitude in the act of disobedience, and thine own; (3) the evils that followed: sickness, death, passions, and depraved will, &c. *Heb.* xii. 15-17.

II. *They are all gone out of the way, &c.* Ps. xiv. 4.

The sin of one passed upon all, and all become children of wrath, enemies of God! What darkness can hide the sinner from the wrath of God? (*Rev.* vi. 15-17.) Let me hate sin, which alone severs me from God.

III. *The wages of sin is death.* Rom. vi. 23.

Temporal and eternal; consider the evils even of the first death, though transitory; much more the second. Learn, my soul, the evil of sin, and repent. *Rev.* xx. 12-14.

Text.

There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death. Prov. xiv. 12.

OF THE DIVINE DECREE AND END OF THE
RESTORATION OF MAN.

Read Ezek. xxxiii. to 20 ; Ephes. ii.

I. *I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but, &c. Ezek. xxxiii. 11.*

First, think of the misery of the fall ; from what, and to what ? Yet God willeth not our death. What would we not do for an earthly king so merciful ? This, yea more, let me do for God. *S. Luke xv. 7, 20 ; 2 Pet. iii. 9.*

II. *I have loved thee with an everlasting love. Jer. xxxi. 3.*

What was the cause of this good-will ? Not our merits ; for “ we were sinners.” How should we act in the case of an enemy ? Yet He hath loved us, enemies. It is thine infinite love, O my God. *Rom. v. 8.*

III. *With loving-kindness (or in pity) have I drawn thee. Ib.*

Another cause is “ His pity, His compassion ;” nor would He have His purpose frustrated by our entire destruction. Man had been tempted by Satan ; God made the cause of man His own. Hope, then, in Him, O my soul. *S. Luke x. 33.*

Text.

God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.
1 Thess. v. 9.

THE DECREE OF THE INCARNATION OF THE
SON OF GOD.

Read Ephes. iii. 1-12.

I. *None can by any means redeem his brother.* Ps. xlix. 7-9.

The creature could not make sufficient satisfaction. The wrong was infinite. What must it be to offend God? Whence, if required, can I give satisfaction? *S. Luke vii. 41, &c.*

II. *He took not on Him the nature of Angels.* Heb. ii. 16.

God, in angel's nature, might perhaps have made satisfaction. He chose the more infirm nature; in it to overcome, and leave us an example. Unite thyself to God, and thou canst overcome. *Heb. ii. 14 and 18.*

III. *Look to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged.* Is. li. 1.

From what a depth man is lifted up, and to what a height! Lead, then, a life worthy of such exaltation. Have I done so? Partakers of the Divine nature! *Is. ix. 2; Eph. ii. 12.*

Text.

In all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren. Heb. ii. 17.

Second Sunday in Advent.

THE FATHER GIVES THE SON, THE SON HIMSELF,
TO THE WORLD.

Read S. John iii. 10-18.

I. *God so loved the world, &c.* Ib. 16.

Who loved us? God! By the gift of His Son. To whom? To us miserable sinners. 1 *John* iv. 10. Give, then, thyself to Him, O my soul; and repent and lament how little thou hast loved Him.

II. *He loved me and gave Himself for me.* Gal. ii. 20.

Notwithstanding He foresaw my ingratitude. What am I now doing? Will He save me if I still resist? *Heb.* ii. 3. Well may I fear in myself. Well may I hope in Him.

III. *Being in the form of God, &c. . . . took upon Him the form of a servant.* Phil. ii. 6, 7.

For thee He gave Himself to poverty, contempt, the cross, death. If thou lovest Him, turn not from these; but embrace, or at least cheerfully receive them. Is this my temper? 1 *Pet.* ii. 21.

Text.

This is My commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you. S. John xv. 12.

For thoughts on the Gospel of the day, see p. 404.

THE WISDOM, GOODNESS, AND OMNIPOTENCE OF GOD
SHEWN IN THE INCARNATION.

Read Ephes. iii. 8-21.

I. *Thou shalt make me to understand wisdom secretly.* Ps. li. 6.

In the Gospel God has made us understand how satisfaction was found for the Divine justice by transferring our debt to the Divine person; and our Creator became also our Redeemer. Divide not, then, thy love; but render to God that which is God's. *Gal. iii. 13.*

II. *Thou hast dealt graciously with thy servant.* Ps. cxix. 65. (*Bountifully, Ps. cxvi.*)

The just gave Himself for the unjust; the harmless for sinners; the Lord for His servant; God for man. Let me turn, then, my whole self to Him. 1 *Pet. iii. 18*; *Ps. lxxiii. 25.*

III. *He hath shewed strength with His arm.* S. Luke i. 51.

The Son of God is His arm, stretched from heaven to save man. In this was shewn omnipotence incarnate and love. He could neither desire nor do more for us. Render, then, to Him all thou canst, O my soul. *Is. lix. 16.*

Text.

Christ, the power of God, and the wisdom of God. 1 *Cor. i. 24.*

BY THE INCARNATION GOD IS WELL PLEASED, MAN
RAISED UP, SATAN CONFOUNDED.

Read 2 Cor. v. 14-21.

I. *All things are of God, who hath reconciled us, &c.*
Ib. 18.

Either pardon or satisfaction necessary for sin. God would have satisfaction in our nature, through the Word. Since thou canst not render it (yet much is required), cast thyself on the infinite treasures of the merits of Christ. *Coloss. ii. 9.*

II. *He raiseth up the poor out of the dust.* Ps. cxiii. 7.

Man had fallen downwards to the dust, to earth; in sense, in affection. God stooped to lift him up unto God. Which, then, shall prevail, things earthly, or the things of God, to draw me? 1 *John ii. 15.*

III. *Now shall the prince of this world be cast out.*
S. John xii. 31.

Satan triumphed, because in one man all were lost. But God found one, Christ, in whom (God and man) Satan is confounded. All may be saved. I, then, cannot conquer but in union with God. With Him all; without Him nothing. *Rom. v. 15; Rev. xii. 10.*

Text.

Thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ. 2 Cor. ii. 14.

A MOTHER IS CHOSEN FOR THE SON OF GOD.

Read Gal. iv. 1-7; S. Luke i. 46-55.

I. *God sent forth His Son, made of a woman.* Gal. iv. 4.

He would not create a new body, but have His Son assume one of the nature of man; of a woman through whom was the first fall. See in this the dignity conferred on the human nature, to be made one with Christ. See His humility, and humble thyself. *S. John xx. 17; Phil. ii. 5, 8.*

II. *He hath regarded the lowliness, &c.* S. Luke i. 48.

He foresaw that the Blessed Virgin would give herself up, through the merits of Christ, to do His will; and He chose and loved her. Would I share the favour of God, I must work with, and according to, His grace, and that in lowliness of heart. *S. John xiv. 23.*

III. *He that is mighty hath magnified me.* Luke i. 49.

What higher than to be the mother of the Lord? So might I be, if, like her, I used the grace which calls me, and makes known to me His will. Attend, then, to all His inspirations. *S. Matt. xii. 50.*

Text.

A man's pride shall bring him low, but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit. Prov. xxix. 23.

THE INCARNATION OF THE SON OF GOD IS PROMISED.

Read Gen. iii. 14, 15; Is. xxxv.

I. *I will put enmity between thee and the woman.*
Gen. iii. 15.

How merciful is God! Man had scarce sinned, ere God offers him the hope of grace and redemption. Do I in heart and soul accept this offer. *Is. lxv. 1, 24.*

II. *Between thy seed and her seed.* Ib.

Thus to all the descendants of Adam this hope was given; but to us not hope only, but enjoyment. Yet which has served him best; they of old, who hoped only; or I, who enjoy the promise? *S. Matt. xiii. 16, 17.*

III. *God will come; He will save us.* Is. xxxv. 4.

Such was the hope of our forefathers; and he leaves none who trust in Him (*S. John vi. 37.*) Will He be less merciful to us? Have we not Him more fully in His sacraments, &c. His merits are my only hope. Offer these continually before God, my soul.

Text.

In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory. Is. xlv. 25.

THE REDEEMER IS DESIRED BY PATRIARCHS AND
PROPHETS.

Read Ps. xlii.; Is. xlv. 8-25.

I. *Drop down, ye heavens, &c.* Is. xlv. 8.

God would have us desire what He promises. He would come to us. He would have us desire Him. Why desire other things so much, Him so little? *Is. xxvi. 8, 9.*

II. *Send Him whom thou wilt send.* Ex. iv. 13.

How ardently they of old desired Him; they implored Him to haste His coming. Our languid desires hinder our prayers, and God's answer. Why am I so languid in Divine desires? Because of my creaturely affections. *Ps. lxxiii. 25.*

III. *We have waited for Him, and He will save us.*
Is. xxv. 9.

Ages passed by; they longed the more. The living and dead hoped for Him; for they knew their need. And so should I more constantly desire Him, if I knew my own wants, and what it is to possess God. Think of this. *Heb. xi. 39, 40.*

Text.

I will shake all nations, and the Desire of all nations shall come. Hagg. ii. 7.

OF THE PRE-EXISTENCE OF ETERNAL WISDOM.

Read Prov. viii.

I. *When there were no depths I was.* Prov. viii. 24.

The great depth is original and actual sin, with which we all are defiled. Wisdom knew no sin, and we are called to renounce and put away sin. Christ was undefiled. Let me follow my vocation in Him. *Eph. iv. 1.*

II. *Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee.* Cant. iv. 7.

The Spouse of Christ should be without wrinkle or defilement, without lust or evil desire. Is there any other law in our members? Let evil inclinations be suppressed, and the spirit have the rule, and there will be peace. *Rom. viii. 6.*

III. *In the knowledge of the Holy is understanding.* Prov. ix. 10.

In the knowledge of God is our true wisdom: in the surrender of our understanding and will to Him. Do I use His gifts for His glory? Do I submit my will to His? *S. Mark xii. 33.*

Text.

Happy is the man that findeth wisdom. Prov. iii. 13.

Third Sunday in Advent.

THE NAME AND PARENTAGE OF THE MOTHER OF OUR LORD.

Read S. Matt. i. 1-17. (S. Luke iii.)

I. *The Virgin's name was "Mary."* Luke i. 27.

Meaning "exalted" or "bitter." Even to her, highly favoured of God, (full of grace,) the Mother of our Lord, is a cup of bitterness and sorrow sent. (S. Luke ii. 35.) Do I willingly receive whatever God sends to me? *Job ii. 10.*

II. *Jacob begat Joseph, the husband of Mary, &c.* S. Matt. i. 16.

The family of Mary was the family of the Faithful (Abraham), and of the Obedient. Do we desire our Lord in our hearts? Be of the same family. *Gal. iii. 9; Rom. iv. 16.*

III. *Which was the son of Adam, which was the son of God.* S. Luke iii. 38.

All are of the family of Adam. Christ humbled Himself to come through one of the sinful family of man. Adam *was* the son of God. We *were* His by adoption. What are we now? *Rom. viii. 15.*

Text.

Ye are the temple of the living God. 2 Cor. vi. 16.

For thoughts on the Gospel of the Day, see p. 294.

THE BLESSED VIRGIN IS ESPOUSED TO S. JOSEPH.

Read S. Matt. i. 18-25.

I. *A virgin espoused to a man, &c.* S. Luke i. 27.

Such was the appointment of God for His Virgin Mother. She yielded herself wholly to His governance, and doubted not. Give thyself to the same, and thou needst fear no danger. 1 *Pet.* iii. 13.

II. *Being a just man was minded to put her away.*
S. Matt. i. 19.

Her espousal was ordered to save her and her Blessed Son from unjust reproach. Perhaps, also, to conceal the mystery for a while. Be careful, then, of the character of others, of thine own, where it is for the glory of God. 1 *Pet.* ii. 12. Be silent as to thine own gifts.

III. *A just man.* Ib.

And of royal lineage ; yet humble and poor. How different the things which God esteems, poverty, humility, chastity, holiness ; and those which the world values, rank, riches, honours ! (S. Luke xvi. 15.) Let my judgment be with God, and I shall not cleave to earthly things.

Text.

All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose. Rom. viii. 28.

THE ANGEL IS SENT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

*Read S. Luke i. 26-28.*I. *The Angel Gabriel was sent, &c. Ib. 26.*

To whom? to a poor, pious virgin, espoused to a carpenter, an angel is sent by God. Such (*S. James ii. 5*) God deems meet for His service; for me also He has provided the inward messages of His Spirit. Had I attended to them, would it not be better with me?

II. *And the Angel came in unto her, and said, Hail thou that art highly favoured, &c. Ib. 28.*

Observe his silence of himself; his salutation of her; learn modesty and humility; he calls her highly favoured, or full of grace; this is the only true praise with God: of what is it I am full? Is it of grace or of self? *2 Cor. x. 18; Rom. ii. 29.*

III. *The Lord is with thee, &c. Ib.*

In heart, in affection, in desire. Blessed indeed such fellowship with God! how seldom am I to be found therein; where do my affections wander? collect them up towards God. *Exod. xxv. 22; Deut. ii. 7.*

Text.

Great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee. Is. xii. 6.

THE ANGEL ANNOUNCES THE MYSTERY OF THE
INCARNATION.

Read S. Luke i. 30-33. (Is. vii. 14.)

I. *She was troubled at his saying.* Ib. 29.

Such was genuine humility: the praise, the announcement (*Ps. cxv. 1.*), overcame her. How do we receive praise? and how blame? she disclaimed what God gave her; do not I (*S. John xii. 43*) seek more than is due?

II. *Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God.* Ib. 30.

This one reason is enough to soothe all: the grace, the favour of God: this should be our strong shield. What have any to fear whom God loves? Let me seek, then, less to please men; let me seek more to please Him. *Rom. viii. 35-39.*

III. *Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, &c.* Ib. 31.

Well may we rejoice with her in holy joy! well may we with her adore the Son, and in Him acknowledge and submit to our King and our God. 1 *S. John iv. 15*; *S. John ix. 38.*

Text.

Blessed is she that believed. S. Luke i. 45.

THE ANGEL EXPLAINS THE MYSTERY OF THE
INCARNATION.

Read S. Luke i. 26-38.

I. *Then said Mary, &c., How shall this be? Ib. 34.*

She does not say, "It cannot be," although she hints at her virgin condition, but "how," leaving all her desires and her future state in the hand of God. Let me love purity of heart and body, and in all things seek His will. *Prov. xxii. 11.*

II. *And the Angel answered, &c., The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, &c. Ib. 35.*

He explains how this, the work of the Spirit forming in her a body for the Word of God, may be. Pray that He only may work in thee, and not self-love, or sense, or human favour. *Ps. cxliii. 10.*

III. *Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. Ib. 38.*

She accepts the promise in humility and obedience. Thus will God be drawn towards us if we abase ourselves, and be far from us if we exalt ourselves. (1 *Sam. iii. 18.*) Which is my state?

Text.

God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. S. James iv. 6.

THE PERFECTION OF THE MANHOOD ASSUMED BY
THE WORD OF GOD.

Read Coloss. i. 14-20.

I. *In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Coloss. ii. 3.*

Consider His perfect omniscience of things natural and supernatural, of God, and of *thee*. Had I real faith I might know more; happy they who in Him find wisdom. *Prov. iii. 13.*

II. *Such an High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled. Heb. vii. 26.*

Perfect by nature; perfect by grace; incapable of sin; Himself the Word. And I, if united to God and separate from the creature, might be richer, holier, stronger. *Rev. iii. 17-18.*

III. *It pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell. Coloss. i. 19.*

All dwelt in Him, and it pleased God; how little is He pleased in us; yet His fulness rested not with Himself; it flowed forth upon us. How often do I close my heart against it. *S. Matt. xxiii. 37.*

Text.

When wisdom entereth into thine heart, and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul, discretion shall preserve thee. Prov. ii. 10.

CHRIST OFFERS HIMSELF TO THE FATHER.

Read Heb. x. 1-10.

I. *Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldst not, but a body hast Thou prepared Me. Ib. 5.*

He offered all to God; soul, body, every thing; for all was from God; all we have is of Him. Why do I offer so much to sense, not all to Him? 1 Cor. iv. 7; S. Matt. xxv. 14, 27.

II. *Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God. Ps. xl. 9, 10.*

He sees poverty, contempt, suffering, death, yet heartily accepts the Cross, and embraces the Divine will. Let me compare with this my own weak conformity to it, and avoiding of the Cross. Heb. xii. 3-5.

III. *I do always those things that please Him. S. John viii. 29.*

For the glory of God, and our salvation, is His great pleasure; all which does not contribute to that end is but loss. Henceforth let this be my only aim. Jer. xiii. 11; 1 Cor. iii. 11-13.

Text.

Let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to Him in well-doing as unto a faithful Creator. 1 Pet. iv. 19.

Fourth Sunday in Advent.

THE BLESSED VIRGIN GOES TO VISIT ELIZABETH.

Read S. Luke i. 39-56.

- I. *Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill country, &c. Ib. 39.*

The Lord being with her, she went into the hill country. One mark of the presence of God is a mind girt up to difficulties. (*Ps. xlv. 5.*) We, then, only safely visit our neighbour when the Spirit of God is with ourselves. *Exod. xxxiii. 12-16.*

- II. *The babe leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost. Ib. 41.*

Even the infant acknowledged the presence of his Lord; none are hid from Him; His children know and love Him. (*Jer. i. 5; Ps. lxxviii. 6.*) Is that witness within me?

- III. *My soul doth magnify the Lord. Ib. 46.*

Elizabeth hath praised the Mother of our Lord; she disclaims the praise, and renders glory to her God, humbling herself. Whatever flows to thee from God, abase thyself, glorify and adore Him. *Dan. ix. 7; S. Matt. viii. 8.*

Text.

Praise the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me praise His holy Name. Ps. ciii. 1.

For thoughts on the Gospel of the day, see p. 232.

JOSEPH IS INSTRUCTED IN THE MYSTERY OF THE
INCARNATION.

Read S. Matt. i. 18-25.

- I. *Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, was minded to put her away privily. Ib. 19.*

He saw what he could not understand, for he knew not the mystery; but he was careful of the reputation of Mary. Learn from his example to excuse the defects of others to thyself, and to screen them from the world. *S. Matt. xviii. 15, 21, 22.*

- II. *Was minded to put her away privily. Ib.*

She could not but be also troubled, yet she committed her way unto the Lord, who ordereth all things for our good (1 *Pet. ii. 23*), and was silent. Does calm submission mark my way?

- III. *The Angel of the Lord appeared, &c. Ib. 20.*

When human counsels fail, the Lord is at hand to help; Mary is spared; Joseph is instructed. The Lord careth for His people, and He careth for me. *Ps. xxvii. 10.*

Text.

He shall make thy righteousness as clear as the light, and thy just dealing as the noonday.
Ps. xxxvii. 6.

THE BIRTH OF S. JOHN BAPTIST.

Read S. Luke i. 57-80.

I. *She brought forth a son, and her neighbours, &c., heard how the Lord, &c.* Ib. 57, 58.

He shewed mercy to Elizabeth by removing barrenness of body; how much more plainly is His mercy seen now, when the barren soul is made fruitful. That only is true greatness which is, like S. John, great before God. S. *Matt.* xi. 11.

II. *They rejoiced with her.* Ib.

Thus holy men rejoice together and give God thanks. Am I so filled with the spirit of gratitude and thanksgiving? How do I receive my daily mercies? *Prov.* xi. 10; *P.s.* cxl. 13.

III. *The hand of the Lord was with him.* Ib. 66.

Yet he was not in favour with the world, nor dwelt among men; God led him into the desert to fit him for His special service. So will He me, and all whom He fits for Himself, as He sees best for us. S. *Matt.* vii. 14; S. *Mark* vi. 31.

Text.

Whosoever shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. S. *Matt.* xviii. 4.

THE OFFICE OF S. JOHN BAPTIST.

Read S. John i. 6-36 (*compare* S. Matt. iii. xi.; S. Mark i.; S. Luke vii.).

I. *He came for a witness, to bear witness of the light.*
Ib. 7.

With his mouth he preached Christ, and in his life and death bore witness to Him. What have I done, said, or suffered for Him? S. Matt. vii. 21.

II. *He shall go before Him in the spirit and power of Elias.* S. Luke i. 17.

Zealous, earnest, devoted, free from fear; such was the spirit of both. Is thine such? or rather, how cold, how fearful, how lifeless! Mal. iv. 5.

III. *To make ready a people prepared for the Lord.*
Ib.

His call was not to Herod or to princes only, but to the people, to the poor. The Christian's call is to all; for all the blood of Christ was alike shed; to all their Master preached. S. Luke vii. 22, 23.

Text.

Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only.
S. James i. 22.

EXPECTATION OF THE MESSIAH.

Read Deut. xxxiii. 12-17.

- I. *There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God.* Ps. xlv. 4.

About this time the Virgin Mother was hourly looking for the birth of her Son and her Lord; it might bring trials to herself, but it was for the salvation of men. In such a case how ought we earnestly to desire the welfare of the souls of others! 1 Cor. x. 24.

- II. *Lo, the winter is past; the flowers appear.* Cant. ii. 11, 12.

Christ, who was to come in human form, must needs be nursed up by an earthly mother. But I, too, may bear Him and tend Him spiritually, and spend my all in His service. S. Matt. xxvi. 6-13.

- III. *So much the more, as ye see the day approaching.* Heb. x. 25.

So much the more should we seek to prepare our hearts for the love and service of our God. His service is freedom, yet it needs an earnest and a resolute mind; am I prepared to sacrifice all that He may be mine, and I His, at His coming? 2 Sam. xxiv. 24.

Text.

I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go, and bring forth fruit. S. John xv. 16.

THE BENEFIT OF BEARING CHRIST WITHIN US.

Read Ephes. iii. 14-21.

I. *Christ in you, the hope of glory.* Coloss. i. 27.

The hope of glory, not yet fully obtained; they who bear His Cross, receive Him, follow Him, love Him, must expect their trials also. Yet without hope of eternal bliss are His commandments difficult; love will make that yoke easy; is it made so to me? *S. John xvi. 33.*

II. *Me ye have not always.* S. Matt. xxvi. 11.

The Mother of our Lord had faithfully waited her time; now it will be hers to tend her Lord in His human form, and provide for His bodily wants. We, too, have His poor always with us; is He so in me that I for His sake serve them? *S. Matt. xxv. 40.*

III. *In Me ye might have peace, in the world tribulation.* S. John xvi. 33.

In Christ, both glory and peace; in ourselves, in the world, trials and difficulties; for these we must prepare ourselves, trusting in Him; even as His Blessed Mother for that sword which was to pass through her own soul. I must not be fearful or faint-hearted. *Deut. xx. 8.*

Text.

Blessed is the man whose strength is in Thee, in whose heart are Thy ways. Ps. lxxxiv. 5.

THE JOURNEY TO BETHLEHEM.

Read S. Luke ii. 1-5.

I. *There went out a decree from Cæsar. Ib. 1.*

He was an earthly sovereign; in such we are bound to acknowledge the power which is from God; the Mother of our Lord obeyed those who were over her; do I humbly follow the same example? *S. Matt. xxii. 21; xxiii. 3.*

II. *Joseph also went up, &c., to be taxed. Ib. 4, 5.*

God had decreed this humiliation also for His Son: subjection to a heathen king. How often have I hidden my faults under a semblance of virtue! here my Lord, under a semblance of necessity, hides His voluntary and deep self-abasement. How different! *S. Matt. vi. 16, 17.*

III. *He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. S. John i. 11.*

The Lord of all; yet no place for Him among His own; yet even now do I open my heart to Him who am doubly His? He standeth knocking; Lord, open Thou my heart and come in. *Rev. iii. 20.*

Text.

Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake. 1 Pet. ii. 13.

Christmas-Day.

ON THE BIRTH OF OUR LORD.

Read S. Luke ii. 1-7.

I. *And so it was : while they were there the days were accomplished, &c. Ib. 6.*

Where were they? think of the poverty, meanness, coldness, misery of the place. (2 Cor. viii. 9.) Would we have Christ born in us? be we, then, lowly and poor, and all our passions cooled and emptied out.

II. *And she brought forth her firstborn Son. Ib. 7.*

With what humility, reverence, adoration, may we suppose her to have received this gift. How ought we to receive it? it is for us also; think also of His infant tears; He was like ourselves; yet more; and He wept for other causes; for we would not follow Him. S. Luke xix. 41.

III. *Wrapped Him in swaddling-clothes, and laid Him in a manger. Ib.*

Poor, and deprived of all earthly comfort from the womb; and yet we flee from that which He sought: no room for Him! (S. Matt. viii. 20.) Shall He not find a place in my soul, who made that soul a dwelling-place for Himself? 2 Cor. vi. 16.

Text.

The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us. S. John i. 14.

For thoughts on the Gospel of the day, see p. 1.

THE MIND OF GOD, OF HIS B. MOTHER, AND OF THE
ANGELS, AT THE BIRTH OF CHRIST.

Read Heb. i., or Coloss. i. 9-20.

I. *This is My beloved Son, &c.* S. Mark ix. 7.

Such was Christ to God; yet He gave Him up for thee, and all His merits with Him. Oh, if we would use these and apply them to ourselves, how rich we should be! (*Coloss. i. 26, 27.*) And Christ gave Himself a sacrifice to the Father for me; let me offer myself a sacrifice to Him. *Rom. xii. 1.*

II. *Mary kept all these things, and pondered, &c.* S. Luke ii. 19.

Well might she cherish the continual remembrance of God's mercy and favour. But it was to us also; do I cherish it, ponder it, delight in it, use it for my everlasting good? *Ps. lxxix. 13.*

III. *Let all the angels of God worship Him.* Heb. i. 6.

This was the will of God, and they rejoiced to do His pleasure, wondering, adoring, desiring (1 *S. Pet. i. 12*), to know more of the mystery. What obligations rest on us for whom this mystery was given!

Text.

To the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever. Heb. i. 8.

For thoughts on the Gospel for the Sunday after Christmas, see p. 23; or for St. Stephen's Day, those at pp. 99-277.

THE BIRTH OF CHRIST ANNOUNCED TO THE
SHEPHERDS.

Read S. Luke ii. 8-20.

I. *And there were in the same country shepherds, abiding in the field, &c. Ib. 8, 9.*

Christ reveals Himself to the simple and the humble; to those that watch; to those that keep guard over the flock (the talents, the passions, affections) entrusted to their keeping. Am I by His grace such? *Heb. ix. 28; Tit. ii. 12, 13.*

II. *And the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and they were sore afraid. Ib. 9.*

The light and knowledge of God should inspire godly fear and reverence; how is this with us? If there is but little reverence, is it not that there is but little light and knowledge of God? *Hab. iii. 3; S. Matt. vi. 22, 23.*

III. *Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, &c. Ib. 10.*

The Angels thus rejoice in our welfare; rejoice we in that of each other; the joy is a Saviour, salvation, to us this day. (*Is. xliii. 3; 2 Cor. vi. 2.*) Do I now accept Him? If not, whose is the fault? *2 Cor. iv. 3, 4.*

Text.

How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace. Is. lii. 7.

Or for St. John Evangelist's Day, p. 184.

THE SIGN GIVEN TO THE SHEPHERDS, AND THE
ANGELS' SONG.

Read S. Luke ii. 12-18.

I. *Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling-clothes, &c. Ib. 12.*

How humble the tokens of the Saviour of the world! God reveals Himself and is to be found in small things (1 *Kings* xix. 11, 12), and must be sought in the contempt of all earthly greatness.

II. *And suddenly there was with the Angel a multitude, &c. Ib. 13.*

The Son abased Himself; the Father gave Him more abundant honour. When we abandon earthly consolations, God sends us heavenly ones. Do I desire such? *S. John* viii. 54.

III. *Glory to God in the highest; and on earth peace, goodwill towards men. Ib. 14.*

All Glory is to God, not to us; if we claim it, He will confound us with shame (*Luke* xiv. 11): 2. Peace; the gift of God's compassion, the fruit of His goodwill towards us. What is my will towards Him, and towards my fellow-creatures? *Is.* lvii. 19.

Text.

Learn of me; for I am meek and lowly. S. Matt. xi. 29.

Or for Holy Innocents' Day, that at p. 76.

THE SHEPHERDS EXHORT ONE ANOTHER TO VISIT
THE SAVIOUR.

Read S. Luke ii. 8-20.

I. *The Shepherds said (spake) one to another.*
Ib. 15.

They did not at once forget, but thought and conversed with each other of the things they had heard. So should all who fear God (*Mal. iii. 16*), not choke the word with other thoughts. *S. Matt. xiii. 22.*

II. *Let us now go even to Bethlehem.* Ib.

It was not only recollecting and talking over these things, but at once proposing to act and move onwards. Such should be the fruits of all hearing and reading (*S. James i. 22*); what is the fruit of mine?

III. *(Let us) see this thing which has come to pass, which the Lord hath made known to us.* Ib.

They wished also to experience and try and see what they had heard. So ought we to strive to do by those things which God speaks to our souls; otherwise the end of God is frustrated, and our souls barren of fruit. *Phil. iv. 8, 9.*

Text.

They will go from strength to strength, and to the God of gods appeareth every one of them in Zion. Ps. lxxxiv. 7.

For thoughts suitable to the end of the year, see pp. 401-4.

THE SHEPHERDS COME TO THE STABLE OF THE LORD.

Read S. Luke ii. 15-18.

I. *And they came with haste.* Ib. 16.

Without actual command, for they earnestly desired to see the Lord. When thou hast resolved on any good thing, defer not, but hasten to accomplish it. *Exod. xxii. 29 ; Eccles. v. 4.*

II. *And (they) found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger.* Ib.

What must have been their joy! so was their earnestness rewarded; they believed, and found it as they were told; hasten to the race which is set before thee. So shalt thou find Jesus. *Prov. viii. 17.*

III. *And when they had seen it, they made known abroad, &c.* Ib. 17.

The beginning of knowledge is to hearken to the word of God; by experience is this knowledge made sure; the end is to impart to others that which God has given to ourselves. (1 *S. John* i. 1-3.) Where do I begin? where end?

Text.

Seek the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him whilst He is near. Is. lv. 6.

THE RETURN OF THE SHEPHERDS FROM THE
MANGER OF THE LORD.

Read S. Luke ii. 15–20.

I. *Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.* Ib. 19.

This is an example of meditation for our instruction; keeping the things of God; keeping all; pondering them. So also should we diligently reflect on such things, lest we let them slip. *Heb.* ii. 1.

II. *The Shepherds returned glorifying and praising God.* Ib. 20.

They returned from converse with Christ, full of holy affections, which they bore with them to their several callings. Would we carry with us in our duties the love of Christ? First, then, have communion with Him. *Acts* iv. 13; *Exod.* xxxiv. 29–35.

III. *For all the things that they had heard and seen.* Ib.

In all things they glorified God. If we would but attend to the calls of His providence, there is nothing for which, and in which, we may not give Him glory. (1 *S. Pet.* iv. 10, 11.) Is this really my first object?

Text.

If a man keep My saying, he shall never see death. S. John viii. 51.

The Circumcision (JAN. 1).

Read Gen. xvii. 10; or S. Luke ii. 21;
Rom. ii. 25-29.

I. *And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the Child.* S. Luke ii. 21.

Christ was sinless, and therefore not subject to the law; yet He submitted to it, though bitter. We transgress the law too often when light, and avoid it when difficult. Is this an imitation of Christ? 2 Cor. v. 21; Eph. ii. 15.

II. *Thy law is within my heart.* Ps. xl. 10.

The Mother of our Lord knew that He was not bound to such a rite; but she knew the will of God, and gave not way to earthly affection. Is our will thwarted? will our neighbour be offended, or a relation grieved? what is the will of God? which shall I follow? *Acts* iv. 19.

III. *How am I straitened till it be accomplished.* S. Luke xii. 50.

Consider also the suffering of our Lord: He who was God foresaw, foreknew it; yet He went cheerfully to it. How do I fall short of Jesus; when I foresee danger or pain, how do I seek to flee from it! S. *Matt.* xvi. 24.

Text.

Lord, why cannot I follow Thee? S. John xiii. 37.

THE REASONS FOR THE CIRCUMCISION.

Read Rom. iii. 19-31.

I. *A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.*
Is. liii. 3.

By the Circumcision of our Lord, the reality of His human body was shewn; that He had truly taken our nature, and was subject to our pains. Be not contented with appearances, but seek the living reality of holiness, and adore God manifest in the flesh. *S. Luke xxiv. 39.*

II. *This is My covenant, which ye shall keep.* Gen. xvii. 10.

Our Lord thus declared Himself a Son of Abraham, to whom this law was given; neither shame nor pain deterred Him; neither should it restrain me from following earnestly my vocation. *S. Matt. x. 38.*

III. *With lovingkindness have I drawn thee.* Jer. xxxi. 3.

He wished to shew thus early His love for us; to suffer for another is the truest mark of love. Do I readily, willingly, cheerfully take up the cross in myself? for Him? for others?
1 *Pet. iv. 1.*

Text.

If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him.
2 *Tim. ii. 12.*

THE VIRTUES SHEWN BY OUR LORD IN THE
CIRCUMCISION.

Read Heb. xii. 1-6.

I. *Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience.*
Heb. v. 8.

1. OBEDIENCE. He was not obliged, yet He obeyed; shewing His willingness to be subject to the whole law, however severe. Why, then, do we shrink even from the lighter yoke of a Christian life, of which also the gain would be all ours? *Ps. i. 2; 1 Kings xii. 4.*

II. *He made Him to be sin for us.* 2 Cor. v. 21.

2. HUMILITY. Our Lord put Himself under the imputation of sin and defilement; yet He knew no sin, nor was His nature corrupt. Compare thyself with Him; thou, a sinner, wouldst be thought righteous; learn to bear all true and even false censures. *S. Luke xxiii. 41.*

III. *Christ also hath loved us and hath given Himself for us.* Eph. v. 2.

3. CHARITY. For us He hastened to suffer and bear an infant's wounds. He sought not glory or comfort, but shame and sorrow, and so early! (*Jer. ix. 23, 24.*) How late, how coldly, how feebly have I loved Thee, O Lord!

Text.

Be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility. 1 Pet. v. 5.

OF THE GIVING OF THE NAME OF JESUS.

Read Phil. ii. 5-11.

I. *His name was called Jesus.* S. Luke ii. 21.

Named "JESUS" in the hour of the Circumcision; when He abased Himself and received the token of a sinner, God exalted Him, and gave Him that glorious name. We are called followers of JESUS; be we also followers of His humility. *Phil. ii. 2.*

I. *He called His name Jesus.* S. Matt. i. 25.

Again think of the rite of Circumcision. The name of JESUS was sealed with blood; we call ourselves followers of JESUS; am I willing to be mortified and suffer with Him? have I been so hitherto? *S. Luke xiv. 26.*

III. *His name was called Jesus.* S. Luke ii. 21.

Once more; in the Circumcision He was pledged to obey and keep the whole law. We are called followers of JESUS; are we, with Him, followers of all the ordinances of God, and of the Christian rule, and of Christ? (*S. Mark iii. 35.*) Examine thyself, consider.

Text.

There is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved.
Acts iv. 12.

THE REASONS FOR THE NAME OF JESUS, AND THE
OBLIGATIONS IT IMPOSED ON US.

Read Acts xiii. 23-41.

- I. *For He shall save His people from their sins.*
S. Matt. i. 21.

Therefore He is called Jesus—Saviour; Him hath God exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour. (*Acts v. 31.*) If we follow Him, where is our zeal for the souls of others? the name of a Christian without the spirit is but dead. *Dan. xii. 3; S. James v. 20.*

- II. *Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.* 2 Tim. ii. 19.

We, who call Him Lord and Master, who bow our heads at His holy name, are especially bound in His name to depart from all sin, to deny ourselves all ungodliness of thought, word, and work. How is this with me? S. Matt. xi. 20-24. Consider, *Acts iii. 16.*

- III. *Whatsoever ye do, &c., do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks.* Col. iii. 17.

Jesus and His glory must be the beginning, the continuance, the ending of all our thoughts and words, and works. This only, and nothing else, should I seek. 2 *Thess. i. 11, 12.*

Text.

Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy Name! Rev. xv. 4.

The Epiphany (JAN. 6).

OF THE CALL OF THE WISE MEN.

Read S. Matt. ii. 1-12.

I *Now when Jesus was born, &c., there came wise men from the East. Ib. 1.*

At the same time Christ was declared to the Jews by an Angel, to the Gentiles by a star. Acknowledge the goodness of God, who will have none shut out, though unwilling and undeserving; think of thine own former years, how He has sought and followed thee. How great has been my neglect! 2 *S. Pet. iii. 9.*

II. *The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light. Is. ix. 2.*

What a miserable state, Gentile darkness; what a miserable state, the darkness of a soul that as yet knows not God. Such was thine till God called thee. Think of this; loathe it; give thanks for His grace. *Rom. ix. 24.*

III. *We have seen His star. Matt. ii. 2.*

The wise men were employed in watching stars; by a star God called them: so He mercifully uses the means open to each of us for our call. See, then, 1, the necessity of His grace to arouse us; 2, learn to consider the condition of others; 3, raise thy mind from created things to God Himself. *Rom. i. 19, 20; Ps. xix. 1.*

Text.

The Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory. Is. lx. 19.

THE WISE MEN OBEY THEIR CALL.

Read Gen. xii. 1-5; 2 Pet. i. 1-11.

I. *We have seen His star in the East.* S. Matt. ii. 2.

Many others probably had seen the star, but these only followed it. How many warnings and inspirations has God sent to me! how few have I followed! He continually calls; why do not I obey? S. Matt. xx. 16.

II. *We have seen . . . and are come.* Ib.

God gave them the privilege of seeing; He gave them also grace, and they used it aright. That grace is in vain which we use not; each may be the last. How have I used it? 2 Cor. vi. 1, 2.

III. *We are come to worship Him.* Ib.

They delayed not to come; the example of some, the ridicule, it may be, of others, the anxiety of friends, hindered not them; what earthly tie hinders my course? Let me no longer delay. (S. John xii. 35.) What was their object? The worship of Jesus! Is not this mine?

Text.

Give diligence to make your calling and election sure. 2 Pet. i. 10.

THE DEPARTURE OF THE WISE MEN FROM THEIR
COUNTRY.

Read Heb. xi. 8-16.

I. *The soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way.* Numb. xxi. 4.

Such were the fears of the Israelites of old; such are the fears of many Christians now. It was not so with these holy men. Yet to all who walk in the narrow way there are trials. Gird, then, up thyself, when fainthearted, O my soul, and be of good courage. *S. John* xvi. 33.

II. *He went out, not knowing whither he went.* Heb. xi. 8.

God had called them, so they went forth; not knowing where He would lead them, they committed themselves to Him. Do I trust Him for the future, only desirous to know and to follow in His way? Well may I do so. *Phil.* i. 6.

III. *They seek a country, ... a better.* Ib. 14.

Yes, their desires were heavenward, like the Patriarchs of old. Yet how few opportunities had they; and I, how many! And yet how cold my desires of seeing and finding Christ. Now help me, O my Lord, to seek in earnest, and to find Thee. *Jer.* l. 4, 5.

Text.

Oh, send out Thy light and Thy truth, that they may lead me, and bring me unto Thy holy hill, and to Thy dwelling. Ps. xliii. 3.

THE WISE MEN ENTER JERUSALEM.

Read S. Matt. ii. 1-4; Cant. iii. 1-4.

I. *Where is He?* Ib. 2.

Had they, then, lost the star, and begun to seek guidance of men?—or why? Was God proving their constancy? So even from His chosen people He withdraws sensible consolations, to see if they will still seek Him. Prove, then, thyself. *Ps.* civ. 29.

II. *He who is born King of the Jews.* Ib.

And this in the very city of the tyrant, the jealous Herod. What a spirit of fearlessness! a lively faith and ardent desire drive away all fears. Do I follow in such a spirit those things which are for the glory of God? *S. Matt.* x. 28.

III. *When Herod had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.* Ib. 3.

It requires but little to disturb and trouble the earthly minded: to such there is no peace. Would I be filled with peace, and free from such tumult of mind? Let me lay aside all love of the world, all earthly affections. *Is.* xlviii. 22; *Jer.* xxx. 5.

Text.

Whom have I in heaven but Thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison of Thee. *Ps.* lxxiii. 24.

HEROD'S INQUIRY WHERE CHRIST SHOULD BE BORN.

Read Ezek. xiv. 1-8.

I. *When he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes together, &c. S. Matt. ii. 4.*

So God's providence orders all things to work His own purpose; and Herod is the means of making known to the wise men the birthplace of the Lord. He uses even unworthy ministers for the good of those who love Him. *Phil. i. 18; Ezek. xxxiv. 7, &c.*

II. *He demanded of them where Christ should be born. Ib.*

He appeared an anxious inquirer—in his heart, an enemy of the truth and of Christ. Have I never clothed an evil passion under the semblance of virtue (*e. g.* anger, as zeal)? *S. Matt. xxiii. 27, 28.*

III. *And they said . . . In Bethlehem. Ib. 5.*

They taught the truth in words; they had no saving knowledge of it. They shewed the way to Him; they sought not Him in it. What have I heard, and known, and said, which tends to Him? How far have I acted on it? *Rom. ii. 17-25.*

Text.

If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them. S. John xiii. 17.

HEROD'S TRANSACTION WITH THE WISE MEN.

Read Ps. ii.

- I. *When Herod had privily called the wise men, he inquired, &c.* S. Matt. ii. 9.

Although this inquiry was hypocritical, and for an evil end, I may well compare the diligence of Herod for it with my own slothfulness in the search for heavenly things. S. Luke xvi. 8; S. John vi. 27.

- II. *Go and search diligently . . . and when ye have found him, bring me word.* Ib. 8.

So, having determined on evil himself, he tries to engage others in helping on his wicked plans. So, if we be not aware, shall we go from depth to depth of evil. Prov. xvii. 14.

- III. *That I may come and worship Him also.* Ib.

Or, that I may kill Him. This is the truth. There is not room for Herod and Christ. Nor can there be a place for the kingdom of Christ in my heart, with self-love and earthly affections: these works of the evil one must be destroyed. 1 Cor. v. 7; 1 S. John iii. 8.

Text.

Deliver my soul, O Lord, from lying lips, and from a deceitful tongue. Ps. cxx. 2.

THEY DEPART FROM JERUSALEM TO BETHLEHEM.

Read Gen. xix. 17-26.

- I. *When they had heard the king, they departed.* S. Matt. ii. 9.

They did no more in the great city than was needful to find Christ; then they went on their way. But how many cares and distractions have I allowed to draw me aside from the narrow path. S. Mark iv. 19.

- II. *And lo, the star . . . went before them.* Ib.

While the guiding star was withdrawn, they still persevered in inquiry; God rewarded their earnestness. In all spiritual dejections and clouds, still seek Him in patience: He will return in due time, bringing consolation. Is. l. 10.

- III. *Till it came and stood over where the young Child was.* Ib.

It brought them at length to Jesus, whom they sought; but it was to one lowly, humble, poor. Where do my objects in life lead me? To vanity and self-exaltation?—they are of Satan; to a poor, and humble, and lowly spirit?—they are of God, and will bring me to God. Rev. xxii. 16.

Text.

In the broad way I will seek Him whom my soul loveth. Cant. iii. 2.

First Sunday after Epiphany.

OF THE ADORATION OF THE WISE MEN.

Read Is. xlix. 1-7.

I. *And when they were come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother.* S. Matt. ii. 11.

They did not despise the poverty nor the meanness which they saw; but by divine teaching, they knew the infant to be God. God made Himself vile for me; I shall not find Him amidst wealth or honours. S. James ii. 1-5.

II. *And fell down.* Ib.

Not only as a sign of respect to Him, but in token of their own nothingness in the sight of God. The knowledge of God and His presence! What reverence of Him, what contempt of ourselves, should it produce in us! 1 Kings xix. 13.

III. *And worshipped Him.* Ib.

Like them, give thanks for His redemption of the world, and for His call of thyself; like them, offer thyself in lowliness to His service. Ps. cxvi. 15, 16.

Text.

Whoso offereth Me thanks and praise, he honoureth Me. Ps. l. 23.

For thoughts on the Gospel of the day, see p. 79.

OF THE GIFTS OFFERED BY THE WISE MEN.

~ *Read Ps. lxxii.*

I. *And when they had opened their treasures, they (offered) unto Him. S. Matt. ii. 11.*

Thus shewing their faith by their works. Not coming empty, but bringing the best of all they had. For gold, let us bring love; for incense, a devoted heart; for myrrh, a self-mortified spirit. 1 *Chron. xxix. 9.*

II. *They presented unto Him gifts. Ib.*

Consider why such gifts were acceptable to God: not because they were costly, but being the fruits of a lively faith, piety, humility, submission. If we would offer acceptably to God, it is not the quantity but the spirit that He esteems. *Ps. li. 16, 17.*

III. *Gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Ib.*

Remember that God, who forgets not our labours of love, repays our offerings with better gifts. For our gold, increase of faith, hope, and charity; for our incense, the spirit of prayer; for our myrrh, His incorruptible grace. Our offerings are but vile, His gifts inestimable. *S. Matt. xiii. 8-12.*

Text.

Promise unto the Lord your God, and keep it; bring presents unto Him that ought to be feared. Ps. lxxvi. 11.

OF THE RETURN OF THE WISE MEN INTO THEIR OWN COUNTRY.

Read Deut. xvii. 8-20.

I. *And being warned of God in a dream.* Matt. ii. 12.

While in doubt, God thus directed them, probably in answer to their prayers. In all trials and doubts seek Him, and He will direct thee. *Exod. xxiii. 20.*

II. *That they should not return to Herod.* Ib.

An earthly governor had bidden one course, God directs another. All earthly claims must be set aside when God speaks either by His word or by His providence. *Acts xvi. 6-12.*

III. *They departed into their own country another way.* Ib.

It had been thought that, while inquiring in Jerusalem, they lost sight of the star: they followed it again, and found Christ. Now they follow His inspiration. So we best avoid sin, when we refrain from that in which we have been once tempted. *Ps. exix. 101; Jer. ii. 19.*

Text.

Thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand and when ye turn to the left. Is. xxx. 21.

FROM THE INFANCY OF CHRIST LEARN CONTEMPT OF
THE WORLD.

Read S. John xv. 18-20.

I. *Love not the world.* 1 S. John ii. 15.

Such is the teaching of our Lord's example. He is born secretly in the night, without pomp, unknown, except to humble shepherds. Do we seek great things or men? Let us learn to love retirement and simplicity. *Jer.* xlv. 5.

II. *The world.* Ib.

We are not told that any visited Christ either from Jerusalem or Bethlehem, though the wise men were directed thither by them. Are we content to be so despised and neglected of the world? *Is.* liii. 3.

III. *Nor the things that are in the world.* Ib.

The wise men offered gold to Christ. He might then have fared better, and gained public notice, yet was content to be without human consolations or attentions. Is not this despising the world? Do we so despise it, or seek it? *S. James* iv. 4.

Text.

Be not conformed to this world. *Rom.* xii. 2.

LEARN HUMILITY FROM THE INFANCY OF CHRIST.

Read Philip. ii. 1-13.

I. *Learn of me ; for I am meek and lowly.* S. Matt. xi. 29.

Thus our Lord speaks to us, even from the manger ; He bids us humble ourselves with Him ; He, the Infinite, become like the weakest infant. And dare I be proud who am but vile earth ? *Lam. i. 11, 12.*

II. *Can there be any good thing come out of Nazareth ?* S. John i. 46.

In His birth, the majesty, goodness, divinity of our Lord, and all His perfections, were hidden from human eyes. Learn hence to refrain from all boasting, and conceal rather than publish our virtues. *Prov. xii. 23.*

III. *Is not this the carpenter's son ?* S. Matt. xiii. 55.

All that our Lord chose was mean ; a poor maid for His mother ; a mechanic for His stepfather ; a stable for His dwelling ; a manger for His cradle. Do I deserve, do I seek better things ? think of Him, and be lowly. *S. Matt. x. 24.*

Text.

It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master. S. Matt. x. 25.

LEARN A SPIRIT OF POVERTY AND CONTENTEDNESS
FROM THE INFANCY OF CHRIST.

Read S. James ii. 1-7.

I. *For your sakes He became poor.* 2 Cor. viii. 9.

He, the Lord of all, who gives to all abundantly, had nothing beyond the meanest necessities. Respect, then, the poor; He sought poverty on earth; let me seek riches in heaven. *S. Luke ii. 24; Levit. xii. 8.*

II. *The Son of man had not where to lay His head.*
S. Matt. viii. 20.

He not only had no more than He needed, but scarcely so much. How do we conduct ourselves when we have not all our desires? let me learn contentment of Him. *S. John iv. 6-11.*

III. *No room for them in the inn.* S. Luke ii. 7.

The place, the time, the animals in the stable of our Lord, all might tend to bring Him discomfort. Consider this and be satisfied, and bear all which God's providence gives; the more He was vile for us, the more let Him be dear to me. 1 *S. John iv. 19.*

Text.

I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty; but thou art rich. Rev. ii. 9.

LEARN OBEDIENCE FROM THE INFANCY OF CHRIST.

Read Col. iii. 12-23.

- I. *He humbled Himself and became obedient.* Phil. ii. 8.

The first act of Christ was obedience ; born while going upon a journey required by law from Nazareth to Bethlehem ; He, the King of kings, thus obeying even an earthly governor. Consider the act of obedience always, rather than the person ; all authority is of God. *Rom. xiii. 1, 2, 4.*

- II. *He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.* Heb. v. 8.

Even in things painful it is a duty to obey ; our Lord submitted to poverty, want, trial, pain. Our will should in all things consent to (*Rom. xii. 2*) the Divine will, and, for His sake, to that of all who are set over us in Him.

- III. *He was subject unto them.* S. Luke ii. 51.

Christ obeyed His earthly parents ; think of their happiness in such a Son. Make those whom God hath set over thee happy also in following His example ; a willing obedience is a great part of it. *Phil. ii. 7.*

Text.

My son, obey My voice. Gen. xxvii. 8.

Second Sunday after Epiphany.

LEARN FROM THE INFANT JESUS, PATIENCE.

Read Heb. xii. 1-13.

I. *Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to My Father.*
S. Matt. xxvi. 53.

Christ might have taken a nature free from suffering, but He would not; He could have freed Himself from suffering and its effects, but He would rather bear it. That which pleased Him, shall we not welcome when He sends it. S. *Luke* xxiv. 26.

II. *They brought Him to Jerusalem.* S. *Luke* ii. 22.

Think of the inconveniences of His journey in childhood, cold, exposure, hunger, His already wounded body. He, the good Physician, thus suffered for the sick. Shall not I suffer for His sake? *Acts* v. 41.

III. *I find no fault in Him.* S. *John* xix. 4.

The sufferings of all His life were borne by Him faultless. To suffer, though innocent, and willingly, is the patience of saints. Such was the patience of Jesus, King of saints. Such should be mine. 2 *Tim.* ii. 12.

Text.

Let patience have her perfect work; that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.
S. *James* i. 4.

For thoughts on the Gospel of the day, see p. 237.

LEARN FROM THE INFANT JESUS, THE LOVE OF GOD
AND OUR NEIGHBOUR.

Read S. Matt. xix. 16–21; xxii. 35–40 (*compare*
Deut. vi. 5; Levit. xix. 18).

I. *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart.* S. Matt. xxii. 37.

The proof of love is in what we do for Him whom we love. Love to God is shewn by zeal for His glory. Christ bore all the sorrows of infancy for the glory of the Father. Do I seek in all things to promote it? *Tit.* i. 16.

II. *Be likeminded one toward another.* Rom. xv. 5.

The love of Christ was shewn towards us also. For us men and for our salvation He was born and suffered. Learn to love thy neighbour, so as to promote his salvation, and be united in His work. *Rom.* xv. 1–6.

III *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.* S. Matt. xxii. 39.

Christ bore all our sorrows, infirmities, sadness. He bore the punishment due to our sins—a penalty which we could not pay. And shall not I bear with my neighbour, feel for him, and sorrow with him? *Is.* liii. 4.

Text.

Receive ye one another, as Christ also received us, to the glory of God. Rom. xv. 7.

LEARN FROM THE INFANT JESUS, WHAT IS
A HOLY LOVE OF OURSELVES.

Read S. John iv. 5-15.

I. *I seek not mine own glory.* S. John viii. 50.

The true love of ourselves is to desire that only which is really and eternally for our good and the glory of God; not that which we desire for the moment. Christ sought not His own but His Father's glory. S. John vi. 27.

II. *My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me.*
S. John iv. 34.

The desire of Jesus for Himself was for the fulfilment of the Divine will in Him. He always did those things which pleased God. Would that this were our rule. How few attempt to follow it! Do I? S. John viii. 29.

III. *Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.* 1 Cor. xv. 50.

Our Lord for this cause accepted humiliation, poverty, contempt, suffering. If we would follow Him, we too must root out all evil passions and desires, according to the will of God: mortifying the flesh and its affections. 1 Pet. iv. 1, 2.

Text.

If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are. 1 Cor. iii. 17.

THE JOURNEY WITH CHRIST FOR THE PURIFICATION.

Read Ps. xlv. 10-17.

I. *And when the days of her purification were accomplished.* S. Luke ii. 22.

According to the letter of the law the Virgin Mother has been thought exempt from this law. But she followed Him who needed not circumcision, yet was circumcised. So for the glory of God should I do and suffer willingly all things. *Ps. xlv. 22.*

II. *Let not your good be evil spoken of.* Rom. xiv. 16.

Had she neglected this rite, she would have been reputed unclean. Yet God knew her purity, and she could have taken comfort in His judgment. (1 Cor. iv. 3, 4.) Yet I too often, when accused by God and my conscience, desire to appear before men what I am not.

III. *I will go forth in the strength of the Lord.* Ps. lxxi. 14.

Think once more of the place they left—its poverty and trials. Yet it had been happy. So was their journey, though weary, for Jesus was with them. Where He is there is neither solitude nor want. *S. John viii. 16.*

Text.

Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. Gal. vi. 2.

OF THE RITE OF PURIFICATION.

Read Levit. xii.

I. *It becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.* S. Matt. iii. 15.

It was generally enjoined, whatever might have been her exemption. The spirit of real obedience was to do that which appeared to be required. If all things are lawful, all are not expedient. Do I forego, for the love of God, things inexpedient? 1 Cor. vi. 12.

II. *Learn of me; for I am meek and lowly.* S. Matt. xi. 29.

The following the example of Christ, who had been circumcised, was another incentive to a willing obedience. Such should be our motive at all times. In doing so we cannot do wrong, or take real harm. 1 S. Pet. iii. 13.

III. *Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man.* 1 S. Pet. ii. 13.

Advancement in the way of purity and godliness is another motive for using all appointed ordinances. Whosoever hath, to him shall be given. (S. Matt. xiii. 12.) And much I need the use of these for the purification of my heart.

Text.

Be ye followers of me, even as I am of Christ.
1 Cor. xi. 1.

REASONS FOR THE PURIFICATION.

Read Rom. xiv. or Tit. ii. 11-14.

- I. *Provide things honest in the sight of all men.* Rom. xii. 17.

By it all scandal was taken away, and the reproach which might have fallen on the work of God. What is worse than to bring reproach on our faith by negligence or an inconsistent liberty? 1 Cor. viii. 9.

- II. *Seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not.* Jer. xlv. 5.

By it the Mother of our Lord took her place among other women, conforming like them to things lawful and right. The spirit of seeking and claiming exemptions or singular favours is to be repressed. Seek to live nobly the life of ordinary, simple men, and we shall have enough to do. Rom. xii. 16.

- III. *Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity.* Ps. xlv. 8.

An ungrudging spirit of willing conformity to the mind of God is accepted of Him. We cannot fulfil all His will, or serve Him enough. To grudge Him service because the letter does not require it, is not the mind of a Christian. Oh, if He were to repay my unprofitableness! S. Matt. xxv. 15-30.

Text.

Follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another. Rom. xiv. 19.

WHAT VIRTUES THE BLESSED VIRGIN PARTICULARLY
EXHIBITED IN HER PURIFICATION.

Read S. Mark xii. 41-44. (S. Luke xxi.)

I. *Before honour is humility.* Prov. xv. 33.

The spirit of obedience and purity have been already mentioned. There was also deep humility. She desired not to seem better than others, but to be what God would have her to be. Take care rather to become than to appear to be holy. 1 *John* iii. 18.

II. *She of her penury.* S. Luke xxi. 4.

There was also a spirit of poverty in her gift. From the offerings of the wise men a larger gift might have been made. But her Lord had made Himself her poor son, and should she seek for a place among the wealthy? How do I act in such matters? 2 *Cor.* viii. 1, 2.

III. *With goodwill doing service as to the Lord.*
Eph. vi. 7.

Her devotion to the service of God we may make our example. In it she followed Christ. In it I should do well to follow her. Offering myself, and all that I have, to His holy service. *Heb.* xiii. 15, 16.

Text.

Not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts. 1 *Thess.* ii. 4.

Third Sunday after Epiphany.

WHY CHRIST WISHED TO BE PRESENTED IN THE
TEMPLE.

Read Heb. x. 1-9.

I. *They brought Him to Jerusalem, to present Him to the Lord.* S. Luke ii. 22.

The Author of the Law desires Himself to fulfil in deed, what in word He had enjoined; not those who call only on Him, but those who obey are blessed. It is not in words but in deeds that true religion consists. S. Matt. vii. 21.

II. *Made sin for us who knew no sin.* 2 Cor. v. 21.

Again; He came to set an example of humility, and subjected Himself, as if a sinner, to the law. How often do we turn the praises of God to our own glory; has He not said His glory He will not give to another? S. John viii. 54.

III. *He loved me, and gave Himself for me.* Gal. ii. 20.

Christ would be ours by a double title; first given to us of the Father, now brought again in His presentation for us. Do I seek in every way how I also may be His? yet every creature, every moment, bids me be so. 1 Cor. iii. 21-23.

Text.

Leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps. 1 S. Pet. ii. 21.

For thoughts on the Gospel of the day, see p. 291.

THE MOTHER OF OUR LORD PRESENTS HER SON, THE
SON PRESENTS HIMSELF TO THE FATHER.

Read 1 Sam. i. 21-28.

I. *By Him let us offer sacrifice.* Heb. xiii. 15.

This presentation of Christ is a type of what Christian offerings should be; the mother came to be purified; she presented Christ to the Father; no service is accepted of God except I offer it with and by and through Christ. 1 S. Pet. ii. 5.

II. *He offered up Himself.* Heb. vii. 27.

Think again how Christ, for the glory of God and the souls of men, was willing to be presented, and to present Himself. Let us seek the same zeal that He had for the glory of the Father, and stir it up within us. Is. xlii. 11, 12.

III. *My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.* S. Matt. iii. 17.

Once more; think how grateful must this have been to God; Christ the only, the beloved Son, presented to Him; the one oblation alone found well pleasing to Him, and that for thee! Heb. ix. 8-12.

Text.

By Him let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually. Heb. xiii. 15.

OF THE CHARACTER OF THE AGED SIMEON, AND THE
MEETING WITH HIM.

Read S. Luke ii. 25-35.

I. *The same man was just and devout. Ib. 25.*

The fear of God is the best disposition for receiving Christ into the soul. A holy and devout mind, continually waiting on God, is ever desirous and ready to receive Him. Have I such a disposition? *Phil. i. 21.*

II. *Waiting for the Consolation of Israel. Ib.*

Notwithstanding so many ages had passed, patriarchs and prophets had expected but not seen Him. Still, this servant of God waited for Him who was his only consolation. What should be my faith, now He has really come? *Heb. xi. 13.*

III. *And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before that he had seen the Lord's Christ. Ib. 26.*

Such was the reward of his constancy, a certain hope of seeing Christ! Such is the hope of all who are pure in heart. Such may be mine. (*S. Matt. v. 8.*) Do I look and wait for His coming again? *Heb. ix. 28.*

Text.

Now, Lord, what wait I for? my hope is in Thee. Ps. xxxix. 7.

SIMEON TAKES CHRIST IN HIS ARMS.

Read again S. Luke ii. 28 (*compare* S. Mark x. 13-16).

I. *And he came by the Spirit into the Temple.* S. Luke ii. 27.

Following this Divine guidance, he found Christ. What if he had delayed? How important to attend to the motions of the Spirit of God! each one may be the last vouchsafed to me. 2 Cor. vi. 2.

II. *Then took he Him up in his arms.* Ib. 28.

The promise was, that he should see Christ; but God granted him more. (1 Tim. i. 14.) Such is the mercy of God! Yet we, in return, vow much and pay little. Has it not been so with me?

III. *And blessed God and said, &c.* Ib.

Consider the heavenly-mindedness of this aged saint. Having Christ, he had all, and now desired to die, and be for ever with God; no more to see, or know, or embrace the creature, who had been permitted thus to embrace his Lord. Ps. lxxiii. 25.

Text.

Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. S. Matt. v. 8.

SIMEON PROPHECIES OF CHRIST.

Read S. Luke ii. (compare 2 Cor. ii. 14-16).

I. *This Child is set for the fall . . . of many.* Ib. 34.

The Saviour set for the fall of sinners! Yes; but of those who, knowing Him, in works deny Him, abuse His grace, and follow not their holy calling. If thou hast been such, repent. *Tit. i. 15, 16.*

II. *And (for the) rising again of many.* Ib.

For many—yes, of all, if they will. For God willeth not (*Ezek. xxxiii. 11*) the death of a sinner; nay, He desires our salvation more ardently than we. Seek, then, to rise from death to life in Him.

III. *And for a sign which shall be spoken against.* Ib.

The whole of the life of Christ, and the course of the lives of men, proves this too true. He ever has endured (*Heb. xii. 3*) the contradiction of sinners against Himself. Has He not endured mine? Henceforth may He be the object of my desires, and the pattern of my life.

Text.

Whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder. S. Matt. xxi. 44.

HE PROPHECIES TO THE MOTHER OF OUR LORD.

Read still as before (compare Ezra ix.).

- I. *A sword shall pierce through thy own soul also.* S.
Luke ii. 35.

So God mingles together things bitter and sweet for His people. The being Mother to Christ had its sorrows; the more she loved Him, the greater her sorrow in His. Do I shew my love to Him, by sorrow for my own sins and those of others? *Ps. cxix. 136.*

- II. *Joint heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with Him.* Rom. viii. 17.

Christ had ever before His mind the foreknowledge of His passion, so she was conformed to His image by the knowledge of her coming trials. Do I desire to be like Him? let me embrace and share His cross. *Rom. viii. 29.*

- III. *There stood by the cross of Jesus His Mother.* S.
John xix. 25.

In some measure the prophecy was true at the moment of the Circumcision; much more at the hour of our Lord's Passion. Such a sword ought to pass through my soul, in memory of those sins of mine for which He suffered. If I repent not! *Rom. ii. 5.*

Text.

Ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. S. John xvi. 20.

THE COMING IN OF THE PROPHETESS ANNA.

Read S. Luke ii. 36-38.

I. *She departed not from the temple.* Ib. 37.

Such was her perseverance in holy things. The crown is only for those who persevere. Do I seek the crown? Why, then, promise so much, and perform so little? *Heb. x. 38.*

II. *But served God . . . night and day.* Ib.

Hers was not a half service: in fasting, in watching, in prayer. Such was a life in which to find and to know God. If we would see Him, we too must be pure of heart (*S. Matt. v. 8*), and crucified to the world. *Rom. viii. 13.*

III. *She coming in that instant.* Ib. 38.

God makes opportunities for His people. It is their gain to use them at once, lest they lose them. He draws as by a cord; one thing hangs on another. If I neglect one, I may lose all. *S. Luke xix. 42.*

Text.

This is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent. S. John xvii. 3.

Fourth Sunday after Epiphany.

OF THE WORDS AND AFFECTIONS OF ANNA THE
PROPHETESS.

Read S. Luke ii. 36-38.

I. *She coming in, &c., gave thanks.* Ib. 38.

The prophetess saw, under the veil of human flesh, the true God. Do we likewise acknowledge Him, unseen yet present, in His Church, His sacraments, His poor? If so, why do we serve Him so little? 2 *S. Pet.* i. 8.

II. *Gave thanks unto the Lord, and spake of Him to all, &c.* Ib.

Anna blessed and glorified God—for what? For His mercies, for His humiliation, for His salvation. Had I the same love, should not I also give thanks, and speak of Him? *S. Matt.* xii. 34.

III. *To all who looked for redemption in Jerusalem.*

She spake then of the Messias, the long-expected, to all—to all who waited for Him. To all, to the meanest of His faithful followers, should we speak of Him, as brethren, and join our praises with theirs. *Is.* xxv. 9.

Text.

*Thou art my God, and I will praise Thee;
Thou art my God, I will exalt Thee.* Ps. cxviii. 28.

For thoughts on the Gospel of the day, see p. 251.

CHRIST IS REDEEMED ACCORDING TO LAW WITH
FIVE SHEKELS.

Read S. Luke ii. 27, 39 (Levit. xxvii. 1-13).

I. *To do for Him according to the law.* Ib. 27.

Part of the law, of which every tittle (S. *Matt.* v. 18) was to be fulfilled, was the redemption of those presented to God. His poor parents bought Jesus again, as it were, to bring Him up for God—ay, and for us poor sinners. Do we who are parents do so for Him by our children?

II. *My Son, give me thine heart.* Prov. xxiii. 26.

He was brought back, as it were, of God, who desired again to make Him ours, by every new title (*Rom.* viii. 32). What can I give for Him? My heart, my affections, myself to God.

III. *Buy . . . without money and without price.*
Is. lv. 1.

Or, again: the five shekels are, as it were, nothing; infinitely small a price for an infinite God. How much do I expend on vanity! how little on God! 1 *Chron.* xxix. 3.

Text.

He was despised, and we esteemed Him not.
Is. liii. 3.

HEROD IS WROTH.

Read S. Matt. ii. 16-18.

I. *When Herod saw that, &c.* Ib. 16.

Herod thought that he saw; but he did not. He accused the Wise Men in his own mind, whereas they were led (*Is.* lv. 8, 9) by the counsel of God. How often have I not dealt so with others?

II. *He was mocked.* Ib.

It was Herod himself (2 *Tim.* iii. 13) that had deceived the Wise Men, pretending that he wished to worship Jesus. What we are ourselves, we too often suppose others to be. If I do not desire others to think so of me, why think so of them?

III. *He was exceeding wroth.* Ib.

So he proceeded from sin to sin, and conceived at last murder in his heart. If we once give way to our evil passions, they will have the mastery. How often have I done so! what evils have I suffered from it? *Rom.* vi. 16.

Text.

The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. S. James i. 20.

THE PURPOSE OF GOD TO WITHDRAW CHRIST FROM
THE REACH OF HEROD.

Read S. Matt. ii. 13-15.

I. *Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?* Job ii. 10.

Whom God loveth, He chasteneth (*Is. liv. 7, 8*)—even His own Son. The life of Christ was in danger: He is protected, yet by what toil and difficulty. How do I receive such providences? Do I murmur, or no?

II. *Endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.* 2 Tim. ii. 3.

Christ was sent, not to the country of the Wise Men, who had Him in honor, but to Egyptians—heathen barbarians, enemies. Are we content with such dispensations; or do we seek honour, esteem, &c.? *Ps. xxxvii. 23.*

III. *In that day shall there be an altar to the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt.* Is. xix. 19.

God, as it were, forgot the conduct of the Egyptians of old, and sent His Son as an emblem of peace and reconciliation. He had punished, now He encourages them. So let me receive His warnings, and still have hope. *Heb. xii. 6.*

Text.

Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. 2 Cor. iv. 17.

JOSEPH IS WARNED BY THE ANGEL TO FLEE INTO
EGYPT.

Read Exod. xxxiii. 12-16.

I. *And the Angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph, . . . saying, Arise, &c. Ib.*

In a dream; at night; while all were still in slumber. We must loose the cords of our tent at the bidding of God. Who shall go with us? It is enough if Jesus be there. *Col. iii. 11.*

II. *Be thou there until I bring thee word. Ib.*

God does not reveal all His purposes; He bids us wait His time. Submit thyself, and therein is true peace. Is my peace such? *2 Cor. xii. 8, 9.*

III. *When he arose, he took the young Child and His Mother. Ib. 14.*

Here is a true example of obedience. Subjection of the judgment; readiness of will; promptness to obey; leaving all to follow the will of God. Is my mind like theirs? *Heb. xi. 8.*

Text.

Commit thy way unto the Lord, and put thy trust in Him. Ps. xxxvii. 5.

OF THE ACTUAL FLIGHT INTO EGYPT.

Read S. Matt. ii. 13-15.

- I. *I will go forth in the strength of the Lord God.*
Ps. lxxi. 14.

In all this toilsome journey there was one only consolation, "This is for the sake of Jesus!" Such a thought makes even bitter things sweet. Blessed are they that suffer for Him. *Acts v. 41.*

- II. *When we were enemies we were reconciled to God.*
Rom. v. 10.

Christ came to die for sinners, even for Herod; yet Herod sought His life. Oh, beware lest I crucify Him afresh by sin, who died for me! *Heb. vi. 6.*

- III. *A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.*
Is. liii. 3.

In all this, Christ bore human discomforts and afflictions, gladly, willingly, for our sakes. What do I bear for Him? *1 Cor. xiii. 7.*

Text.

If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him.
Tim. ii. 12.

OF OUR LORD'S SOJOURN IN EGYPT.

Read Ps. cxx.

I. *How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?* Ps. cxxxvii. 4.

Our Blessed Lord, as God, knew all things; He knew that He was dwelling in a heathen nation, enemies of God and of His people. Do I feel the misery of such a sojourn? have I an earnest zeal for God when among ungodly people? Ps. cxix. 53, 136.

II. *He was despised.* Is. liii. 3.

If He was poor among His own people, how much more so in a strange land! there without honour, for they knew Him not. Do I know Him? If I do, do I love Him, esteem Him, and sorrow for those who know Him not? S. Matt. xiii. 17.

III. *Jesus wept.* S. John xi. 35.

He must have known and felt for the privations of His parents, and the sorrows of the childless mothers who were slain for Him. Do I feel for those who are in need, and for all who suffer in any way for me? S. John xi. 33.

Text.

I beheld the transgressors, and was grieved because they kept not Thy word. Ps. cxix. 158.

Fifth Sunday after Epiphany.

THE MURDER OF THE INNOCENTS.

Read S. Matt. ii. 16-18 (Jer. xxxi. 15).

I. *Then Herod . . . sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem.* Ib. 16.

Such was the end of Herod's ambition. Try to remember all thine own falls caused by some one small beginning. Resist passion early, lest it gain the dominion. *Ps. xix. 13.*

II. *And in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under.* Ib.

Thus Herod used every necessary means, and more than was needful, to accomplish his wicked object. Oh, were I but half as cautious in avoiding evil, as the sons of wickedness are in committing it! *S. Luke xvi. 8.*

III. *Every purpose of the Lord shall be performed.* Jer. li. 29.

All the counsels of God are infinite and wise; even the actions of evil men are made to work His glory. By this cruel act the coming of the Messiah was but the more made known. These little ones were eternally saved. *Is. lvii. 1.*

Text.

These were redeemed from among men, being the first fruits unto God and the Lamb. Rev. xiv. 4.

For thoughts on the Gospel of the Day, see p. 303.

JOSEPH IS BIDDEN TO RETURN.

Read Ib. 19-23.

I. *But when Herod was dead.* Ib. 19.

Even while Christ was an infant, by whose death he hoped to establish his own kingdom. In time, God visits the sins of the wicked upon them: take heed how thou temptest Him. 1 *Thess. v. 3.*

II. *An Angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt.* Ib.

No sooner is the fit hour come, than God makes it known to His servant. How well may I trust in Him who careth for me! Thee will I praise, my Lord, my God, my Guide. 1 *S. Pet. v. 7.*

III. *Arise, take the young Child and His Mother, and go into the land of Israel.* Ib. 20.

He leaves the whole land to his choice: all the land of promise is the home of the children of God. If we would know more, we must inquire of Him who loves to be inquired of. *Ezek. xxxvi. 35, 37.*

Text.

Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel, and after that receive me (into) glory. Ps. lxxiii. 24.

OF THE RETURN FROM EGYPT.

Read Ib.

I. *And he arose, and took the young Child, &c. Ib. 21.*

Equally ready to go and to return, at the bidding of God; to go into, or to remain in, trials. What is my spirit? Am I quick to excuse myself? slow to obey? &c. 1 *S. Pet.* v. 6.

II. *When he heard that Archelaus did reign, &c., he was afraid. Ib. 22.*

There was nothing really to fear; nor did they fear for themselves, but for the Child Jesus. Make my affections, O Lord, such, that I may fear only the loss of Thee. *Ps.* lxxiii. 25; xxii. 11.

III. *He came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth. Ib. 23.*

He chose the humbler place; not the royal city, but the despised Nazareth. By so much the more I may exalt Him as I abase myself. (*S. Luke* xiv. 10.) Saints and Angels bow before Him. (*Rev.* v. 8; vii. 11.) Bow down thyself, my soul!

Text.

Lo! I come, to do Thy will, O God. Heb. x. 7.

CHRIST GOING UP TO JERUSALEM WITH HIS PARENTS.

Read S. Luke ii. 40-42.

I. *His parents went to Jerusalem every year. Ib. 41.*

Such was their pious custom; it was, for Joseph, according to the law. Can we doubt the blessing that followed? Can I doubt how far better it had been with me, had I persevered in uniform obedience to my holy vocation? *S. Matt. xxiv. 13; Ps. lxxxiv. 7.*

II. *His parents. Ib.*

The law required this only of males; but the blessed Mother went also. God was honoured, and her soul profited. That soul thrives badly who aims at no more than the letter of the law. Is my aim more? is it as much? *S. Matt. xxv. 25.*

III. *In the midst of the congregation will I praise Thee. Ps. xxii. 22.*

Christ, the holy Child, went also. Oh, that blessed company! Happy they who thus walked with Jesus. Happy, too, may I be, and full of all consolation, if He is with me, and I walk with Him. *Ps. lxxxix. 15.*

Text.

I will give thanks unto the Lord, with my whole heart, secretly among the faithful, and in the congregation. Ps. cxi. 1.

OF THEIR GOING UP TO THE TEMPLE.

Read Ib.

I. *When He was twelve years old.* Ib. 42.

At the age at which the understanding and judgment begin to manifest themselves, He shewed that His first care was for the service and glory of God. Oh, that from our youth upwards we and ours had so served Him. *Eccles. xii. 1; Ps. xxv. 7.*

II. *They went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast.* Ib.

And His parents with Him. But Archelaus, of whom Joseph had been afraid, was still on the throne! But now he fears not; duty and the honour of God are to be considered. Am I courageous for Him? Do I rely on His safeguard? *Acts iv. 19.*

III. *Present your bodies a living sacrifice.* Rom. xii. 1.

So did they. Let me accompany them in spirit; observe and imitate their humility, reverence, gratitude, fervour; and compare with it my own habit of body, soul, and spirit; see where I lack and mend my ways. *1 Thess. v. 23.*

Text.

The Lord loveth the gates of Zion. Ps. lxxxvii. 1.

THE CHILD JESUS TARRIES IN THE TEMPLE.

Read S. Luke ii. 43, &c. (Ps. cxxii.)

I. *When they had fulfilled the days, as they returned.*
Ib.

They were not satisfied to go up merely, but they remained till the whole feast was passed. Let it be our desire to offer to God a whole, not a mutilated service. 1 Sam. xv. 18-23.

II. *The Child' Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem.* Ib.

So well was He affected to all that belonged to God; His desire was to the house of His Father; this He preferred to all company and all places. Is my heart there with Him? Ps. xxvi. 8.

III. *And Joseph and His Mother knew not of it.*
Ib.

Yet He knew the sorrows it would give them, but He heeded not this; His work was for God. If I find the ways of those about me are not towards Him (and how often they are impediments to His service), do I follow them or Him? S. Luke xiv. 26.

Text.

He that loveth father or mother more than Me, is not worthy of Me. S. Matt. x. 37.

HIS PARENTS SEEK THEIR LOST SON.

Read Ib. 44, 45. (Cant. iii.)

- I. *They, supposing Him to have been in the company, went a day's journey. Ib. 44.*

It would seem strange that they could bear separation from the Holy Child; but He was in favour with God and man. They may have borne it willingly for the sake of the comfort and edification to others. And this is charity. *Rom. ix. 3.*

- II. *And sought Him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance. Ib.*

They sought Him diligently, but found Him not. Jesus is not to be found amid earthly ties and affections; these distract rather than draw the soul. Where do I seek Him? *Job xxiii. 8-10.*

- III. *And when they found Him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem. Ib. 45.*

Still they sought Him, but now with better hope, for they turned towards Jerusalem. So when God hides His face, it is that I may seek Him again in His heavenly home, in Jerusalem, the city of peace. *Lam. iii. 25; Is. liv. 7, 8.*

Text.

Thou didst hide Thy face; and I was troubled. Ps. xxx. 7.

Sixth Sunday after Epiphany..

CHRIST SITTING AMONG THE DOCTORS.

Read Ib. 46, 47. (1 Sam. iii.)

I. *They found Him in the temple.* Ib.

It is not said that they sought him elsewhere in Jerusalem; there, in the temple, they knew His heart was; not in the streets and distractions of worldly life. Where do I seek for rest in trouble? amongst men, or in prayer? *Cant.* iii. 1, 2.

II. *Sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions.* Ib.

Who is wise enough, when Jesus sits among the doctors? True wisdom is to ask that we may learn, to hear that we may practise. Let us not despise the teachers appointed of God. *Prov.* i. 8; *S. Matt.* xxiii. 2, 3.

III. *All that heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers.* Ib. 47.

His words were truth, and light, and life; they were astonished at them. We have them all, and more than they heard; how coldly have I received them! how little acted on them! *Ps.* exix. 130.

Text.

How sweet are Thy words unto my taste.
Ps. exix. 103.

For thoughts on the Gospel of the day, see p. 400, &c.

HIS MOTHER'S WORDS ON FINDING HIM.

*Read Ib. 48. (Ps. cxxvi.)*I. *Son, why hast Thou thus dealt with us ? Ib.*

She was unable to restrain herself, and shewed before all men her grief, acknowledging her love of Him. God pleads with us, and in His mercy permits us to plead with Him. *S. Matt. xii. 34. (Job xl.; Gen. xviii.)*

II. *Thy father and I. Ib.*

She spoke her own heart's desire; yet first mentioned Joseph; a pattern at once of humility and love. Here is a test for me. Who do I put first? Others or myself; not in word only, but in thought? *Rom. xii. 10.*

III. *Have sought Thee sorrowing. Ib.*

Their sorrow led them to seek Him whom they loved. It is not enough to sorrow for the loss of the presence of Christ; I must seek Him anew with all diligence; He may withdraw to teach us to seek Him, and enhance our joy in finding Him. *Ps. lxix. 32.*

Text.

My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me. Ps. xxii. 1.

THE ANSWER OF CHRIST TO HIS MOTHER.

Read Ib. 49, 50. (Neh. vi. 1-4.)

I. *How is it that ye sought me?* Ib. 49.

They needed not to seek Him as if He knew not what to do; His counsels and wisdom are infinite. To these should we submit, even when for a while He withdraws Himself; the day of comfort will return. *Rom. ix. 20.*

II. *Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?* Ib.

They knew, or ought to have known, what His care was to do His heavenly Father's will; for this all, father, mother, every thing dear on earth must be left. Do I so fulfil my vocation? *S. John vi. 38.*

III. *And they understood not the saying.* Ib. 50.

Not even to her was all made known at first; as we grow in grace, so also in knowledge and understanding of divine mysteries; yet they questioned not His saying. Do I so receive His providences, even when I understand them not? *S. John vii. 17.*

Text.

The zeal of thine house hath eaten Me up.
S. John ii. 17.

THE GOING DOWN FROM THE TEMPLE.

Read Ib. 51. (Ruth i. 15-18.)

I. *And He went down with them.* Ib.

His whole life was coming down; from heaven to earth, from the mount to toil and sorrow, from the cross to the grave. In all things a pattern of self-abasement. *S. James* i. 9, 10.

II. *And came to Nazareth.* Ib.

To a place despised of many, the lowly dwelling of His poor mother and her husband. Let me not seek the place or the company of the great of this world. *Rom.* xii. 16.

III. *And was subject unto them.* Ib.

In all things; God subject to the creatures of His hand. Let me try and picture to myself His life, and from it learn the greatest honour is to be found in the lowest offices of charity and love. Do I delight in or avoid such? *S. John* xiii. 14, 15.

Text.

All of you be subject one to another. 1 Pet.

HIS INCREASE IN WISDOM, STATURE, AND FAVOUR.

Read Ib. 52. (Gen. xxxix. 1-6.)

I. *Jesus increased in stature.* Ib.

He might like Adam have assumed a nature of full age; but He would pass through every period of life to bear the more for us; for this only He supported His body. For His service only should I nourish mine, following Him. 1 Cor. x. 31.

II. *In wisdom.* Ib.

Yet was He all wisdom from all eternity; but He grew in all grace in the sight of men. I have grown in years; have I grown in grace? I have learnt human wisdom; have I learnt divine? Col. ii. 3; 1 Cor. i. 20.

III. *In favour with God and man.* Ib.

So our blessed Lord united the glory and good pleasure of God with the instruction and edification of man. Have I sought only to please man? this is vanity. Have I forgotten my neighbour? it is the better following of Jesus to edify him while I glorify God. S. Matt. v. 16.

Text.

In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. S. John i. 4.

THE LIFE OF CHRIST UNTIL HIS THIRTIETH YEAR.

Read Is. liii. 1-4.

I. *My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work.* S. John iv. 34.

That work was to bear our sins, to procure our salvation. On this we may believe He thought, counting up the sins of all men, seeing them beforehand, sorrowing over them, interceding. Oh, that I might henceforth be a joy, not a sorrow to Him! 1 *Thess.* ii. 19, 20.

II. *He whom Thou lovest is sick.* S. John xi. 3.

Our Lord did not shut Himself up against human ties and affections; those who knew Him, knew His tenderness and sympathy. Such ought to be ours. Our intercourse with others should be for their comfort or profit. What is mine? *Mal.* iii. 16, 17.

III. *Is not this the carpenter's son?* S. Matt. xiii. 55.

He who was subject to His parents, doubtless laboured with and for them. He willingly put Himself under the law made, not for Him, but for us. (*Gen.* iii. 19.) Not restless to teach others; waiting His Father's time. How do I employ my talents, my time? 1 *Cor.* iv. 12; *Rom.* xii. 11.

Text.

Consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself. Heb. xii. 3.

WHAT LESSONS WE MAY LEARN FROM THE YOUTH OF
CHRIST.

Read Gen. xxii. 1-10.

I. *Thy Father which seeth in secret, &c.* S. Matt. vi. 6.

1. Learn *humility*. His divinity, wisdom, miraculous powers, were all concealed for many years: He lived in Nazareth almost unknown. Do I keep from, or press into observation? *Prov. xv. 33; 1 S. Pet. v. 5.*

II. *My Son, keep Thy Father's commandments.* Prov. vi. 20.

2. Learn *obedience*. Towards God, whose work and business He would be engaged in. Towards man, for He sat learning of the doctors, and was subject to His parents. Do I shew diligence in my calling, readiness of will in all good things? *Rom. v. 19.*

III. *In your patience possess ye your souls.* S. Luke xxi. 19.

3. Learn *patience*. He lived many years in poverty and comparative want: it was pleasing to God. But how distasteful is it to men! how they shrink from it! Do not I? Yet patience and contentment is real gain. *1 Tim. vi. 6.*

Text.

Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. S. Matt. xi. 29.

Septuagesima Sunday.

THE DECREE OF THE HOLY TRINITY THAT CHRIST
SHOULD DIE.

Read Ps. lxxxv.

I. *They are altogether become abominable.* Ps. xiv. 4.

Man had sinned: shall he perish? The justice of God is offended, because man has despised God and His command, notwithstanding he had a nature capable of obedience, and the warning of the fallen angels. *Ps. lxxxix.*

II. *Mercy and truth have met together.* Ps. lxxxv.
10.

Yet the mercy of God pleads the infirmity and misery of man; the exhibition of the love and goodness of God in the pardon of man. In this plea join with all thy soul. *Ps. li. 1.*

III. *It is expedient that one man should die for the people.* S. John xi. 50.

Such was the merciful decree of the Most High. How good for the glory of God! how good for our salvation! What do I not owe to God! How much can I love, how much can I serve Him! *Jer. iii. 12.*

Text.

Thus it behoved Christ to suffer. S. Luke
xxiv. 46.

For thoughts on the Gospel of the day, see p. 381.

THE COUNCIL OF THE PHARISEES AGAINST CHRIST.

Read S. John xi. 45-57.

I. *Then gathered (they) a council.* Ib. 47.

Who? The enemies of Christ, against the loving Benefactor of men. If thou wouldst then have been indignant against their council, be wrathful now against thyself, whose evil passions have rebelled against Him.

Sam. xii. 7-13.

II. *This man doeth many miracles.* Ib.

“This man” they call Him, despising Him, though they acknowledge His power. Oh, how often have I in my heart acknowledged and known His will, but in my words and deeds made light of it! Make me, O Lord, now to love and serve Thee only. *Deut.* xi. 13, &c.

III. *It is expedient that one man should die.* Ib. 50.

And thus the Just One is condemned in secret, unheard, unaccused, unconvicted. So do evil men. Yet God, who bringeth good out of evil, had so ordered His own decrees, that they did but work His will. Learn this, and be wise. *Prov.* xvi. 33.

Text.

All things work together for good to them that love God. Rom. viii. 28.

THE SUPPER IN BETHANY SIX DAYS BEFORE THE
PASSOVER.

Read S. John xii. 1-8.

I. *There they made Him a supper, and Martha served. Ib. 2.*

This was in the house of another person where Martha was serving. There is no place or time where we may not serve Him. Dost thou love Him? This is the proof of it, that every where, and at all times, we seek occasion to serve Him. 2 Cor. v. 14, 15.

II. *Then took Mary a pound of ointment, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus. Ib. 3.*

She had once done so, on her conversion and forgiveness; now again, a thanksgiving for her brother's life. At the feet of Jesus is the place for us to lie in humility and love. There bring the real offerings, not of outward works only, but the affections of the heart. Ps. xxix. 1, 2.

III. *And the house was filled with the odour of the ointment. Ib.*

We are unto God a sweet savour of Christ (2 Cor. ii. 15); to our neighbour, by edification and good example. Are we such in our homes, in the Church, before all men? or, by bad habits and example, is our savour to be abhorred?

Text.

Her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. S. Luke vii. 47.

THE DISCIPLES MURMUR AGAINST MAGDALENE.

Read S. Matt. xxvi. 6-13.

I. *When His disciples saw it, they had indignation.*
Ib. 8.

They did not understand her motive. We see only the outside; God sees the heart. Yet we impute evil motives to others. How often have I done so, when I could impute good ones! *S. Matt. xi. 18, 19.*

II. *Then saith one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot.*
S. John xii. 4.

S. Matthew and S. Mark speak of others murmuring also. So often does the discontented and evil mind of one draw others along with it. Take care neither to begin nor to follow others who begin an evil spirit of discontent. *Numb. xvi.*

III. *This ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor.* *S. Matt. xxvi. 9.*

So with hypocrisy he made a cloak for his covetousness. How often have I excused anger, by zeal; undue familiarity, by love; attachment to the creature, by a fruitful conversation! &c. But God is not mocked. *1 Pet. ii. 15, 16.*

Text.

Charity—thinketh no evil. *1 Cor. xiii. 5.*

CHRIST DEFENDS MARY MAGDALENE.

Read S. Luke vii. 39, &c. (S. Mark xiv.)

I. *Jesus said, Why trouble ye the woman? &c.* S. Matt. xxvi. 10.

Our Lord ever defends the persecuted and helpless. Here He defends her against Judas; at another time, against the hypocrisy of the Pharisees (S. Luke vii.); and once more, against the worldly-mindedness of Martha. Are we pained by the accusations of others, our consolation is in Him. *Is.* xli. 10, 11.

II. *Ye have the poor always with you.* Ib. 11.

Our Lord did not defend Magdalene by exposing Judas. Nor should we defend ourselves by betraying the fault of another. (*Gen.* iii. 12, 13.) He praised her for doing beforehand, what could not be done afterwards. Am I as ready and early in my service as she?

III. *Whosoever this Gospel shall be preached . . . this . . . shall be told for a memorial of her.* Ib. 13.

Mary had not answered Judas, but left her cause with Christ. He gave her the praises of the faithful to all generations. "The humble shall be exalted." How do I receive an unjust reproach? *Ps.* xxxix. 1; *1 Pet.* ii. 23.

Text.

The poor committeth himself unto Thee, for Thou art the helper of the friendless. (C. P. B. version) *Ps.* x. 16.

GOING UP TO JERUSALEM CHRIST FORETELLS
HIS PASSION.

Read S. Mark x. 32-34. (S. Matt. xx. ;
S. Luke xviii.)

I. *Jesus went before them, and they were amazed.*
Ib. 32.

They were surprised to see their Master in haste. To what was He hastening? to honour? No: to the cross. To what do I hasten most? To worldly profit, or the following of Christ, and those who follow Him? *Acts* xx. 16, 22.

II. *The Son of Man shall be delivered, &c.* Ib. 33.

Again He foretells His passion, loving to think and speak of it for love of us, as an encouragement to them. Do we suffer? let us suffer with a good will, remembering that Jesus is with us. *Acts* xx. 22-24.

III. *They understood none of these things.* S. Luke xviii. 34.

For they looked for an earthly kingdom and glory; they had not yet learned Christ. If we think but little of Him, it is because we yet cleave to earthly things. But why do I so? the disciple is not above the master. S. *Matt.* x. 24.

Text.

The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God. 1 Cor. ii. 14.

OUR LORD'S PREPARING FOR THE SOLEMN GOING
UP TO JERUSALEM.

Read S. Matt. xxi. 1-7. (S. Mark xi.; S. Luke xix.)

I. *And Jesus, &c., took the twelve disciples apart.*
S. Matt. xx. 17.

Our Lord knew the plot of the Jews, yet He went openly, of His own free will; giving one more opportunity to acknowledge Him as Messiah. God gives to all grace (*Eph. iv. 7*); all do not use it. Do I?

II. *Go ye into the village and . . ye shall find, &c.,
. . . say, The Lord hath need.* S. Matt. xxi. 2.

He shews His Godhead by knowing things unseen: and He sees and knows thee. (*Prov. xv. 3.*) He is Lord. When He calls on me to subdue a passion, to restrain a desire, do I do so? Think on these words, "The Lord hath need of it;" give it up for His sake.

III. *The disciples went and did as Jesus commanded.*
Ib. 6.

They asked no question, but immediately obeyed. The owner of the animals heard "The Lord hath need," and he let them go. So desirous were they to please God. Is my will ready to accomplish His inward suggestions? 1 S. John iii. 21, 22.

Text.

The Lord hath need of them. S. Matt. xxi. 3.

Sexagesima Sunday.

THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY OF CHRIST INTO JERUSALEM.

Read S. Matt. xxi. 7-11. (S. Mark ; S. Luke.)

I. *They put on them their clothes, and they set Him thereon.* Ib.

Who could have stirred up such praises for one so lowly and humble, except God, who moves the hearts of all? He only can make me rightly esteem that which is truly good, above all, Christ Himself. *Ps.* xxix., cx.

II. *They cried, saying, Hosanna, &c.* Ib. 9.

The three great proofs of devotion were given by these people: the love of the heart; the praises of the mouth; the works of their hands. Do, then, my own words and works come forth of a pure and loving and believing heart? *Rom.* x. 10.

III. *Behold, thy King cometh unto thee.* Ib. 5.

Imagine thyself bidden to meet Him. To me He comes, for atonement, redemption, sanctification, salvation; to me, miserable and vile! See that thou open to Him the gates of thy heart, that the King of glory may come in. *Zech.* ix. 9; xiv. 5.

Text.

Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear My voice and open the door, I will come in. *Rev.* iii. 20.

For thoughts on the Gospel of the day, see p. 301.

THE ENVIOUS WORDS OF THE PHARISEES.

Read S. John xii. 16-19. (S. Luke xix. 37-40.)

I. *Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing?* Ib. 19.

With all their malice, they were obliged to confess their own nothingness. If others envy thee, they can do nothing without the will of God; if others obtain praise, see thou envy them not. *Ps.* xlix. 16.

II. *The Pharisees said, Master, rebuke Thy disciples.*
S. Luke xix. 39.

They seek their evil end through the humility of Christ, calling Him "Master," as if they revered Him. Yet now should not His real disciples praise their Lord? Envy and such evil passions see every thing amiss; Lord, put this spirit far from me. *Tit.* i. 15.

III. *If these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.* Ib. 40.

How can they be silent whose mouths God has opened? Even the hardest heart God may soften by His grace. Has He not tried to soften mine? how often have I withstood His grace! *S. Matt.* xii. 34; *Ps.* cxiv. 7, 8.

Text.

Charity envieth not. 1 Cor. xiii. 4.

- CHRIST WEEPS OVER JERUSALEM.

Read S. Luke xix. 41-44 (and see the Lamentations of Jeremiah).

I. *And when He was come near, He beheld the city, and wept over it. Ib. 41.*

In Jerusalem He saw a figure of the whole world; yes, even of thee. He knew that His grace was sufficient (*S. John v. 40*), if men would use it. But if not, His grace is in vain.

II. *If thou hadst known, even thou, in this thy day, &c. Ib. 42.*

The blindness of men brought tears to the eyes of the Lord. This is thy day, even this life; then shall be the day of the Lord. Open, then, mine eyes, O Lord, that I may see. *S. John ix. 4; Heb. ix. 27.*

III. *The days shall come upon thee that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, &c. Ib. 43.*

Our sins pave the way for the judgments of God. In that day the enemies of the soul and the remembrance of his own sins shall hedge in the sinner who hath not known or used aright the day of grace. *1 Tim. v. 24.*

Text.

Receive not the grace of God in vain. 2 Cor. vi. 1.

JUDAS AGREES WITH THE CHIEF PRIESTS FOR THE
BETRAYAL OF JESUS.

Read S. Matt. xxvi. 14-16. (S. Mark xiv.; S. Luke xxii.) [Compare Gen. xxxvii. 28.]

I. *Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests.* Ib. 14.

Then, that is, when covetousness had entered his heart. Such is the end of unrestrained passions. First covetousness; then discontent; then hatred; then betrayal. Fear thou the first beginnings. Ps. xix. 13.

II. *What will ye give me, and I will deliver Him unto you.* Ib. 15.

The price he left to the enemies of Christ; of so little value did he esteem his Lord. How much more has He counted us who gave Himself for us! Is* liii. 3.

III. *And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver.* Ib.

Thus vilely did they value Him. Yet it was all ordered in the counsels of God. So did He humble Himself. And I have nothing great that I can give for Him. Let me give the nothing that I have; He will give Himself to me. Zech. xi. 12, 13.

Text.

Take heed, and beware of covetousness. S. Luke xii. 15.

THE PASCHAL SUPPER.

Read S. Luke xxii. 7-18. (S. Matt. xxvi.;
S. Mark xiv.) [Exod. xii.]

I. *Go into the city, &c. . . I will keep the Passover at thy house.* S. Matt. xxvi. 18.

He had not even a place wherein to keep the appointed feast; He, the Lord of all. Yet as Lord He spake, and was instantly obeyed by the master of the house. Is my obedience such to those whom God hath set over me? *Acts* x. 33.

II. *With desire I have desired to eat this Passover.* S. Luke xxii. 15.

His desire increased as His passion drew near; He longed for our redemption. The proof of love is a willingness to suffer. Have I such a proof in myself? *S. John* x. 11.

III. *Your lamb shall be without blemish.* Exod. xii. 5, &c. (*Compare* Gen. xxii. 8.)

In all these things Christ fulfilled the law in Himself. The Lamb slain, and offered a sacrifice for sin. Think of His love for thyself; think of that offering, and be thankful. *Rev.* xiii. 8.

Text.

Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world S. John i. 29.

CHRIST WASHING HIS DISCIPLES' FEET.

Read S. John xiii. 1-11.

I. *Knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands. . . He riseth from supper.* Ib. 3, 4.

“And began to wash the disciples’ feet.” What a picture of His majesty, and of His humility! All things His, yet He stoops to the lowest offices. If they are, then render thyself unto Him, that He may wash and cleanse from all sin those feet that have followed others than Him. *Deui. xii. 29, 30.*

II. *He riseth from supper, and laid aside His garments, &c.* Ib. 4.

Why did He do so alone? (*Is. lxiii. 5.*) They too were sharers in His powers, which He bestowed on them, of healing, absolving, &c., why not, then, in this humility also? To teach me by example, that if I am truly humble, I must be ready before all for the meanest service.

III. *Lord, dost Thou wash my feet?* Ib. 6.

S. Peter thus learnt his own vileness, his Lord’s greatness and goodness. (*Eph. ii. 4-8.*) Do I learn the same for myself, on whom He daily bestows the meritorious washing of His blood? Not my affections only, but my thoughts and my works should be His.

Text.

Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. S. John xiii. 9.

OUR LORD'S ADMONITION TO HIS DISCIPLES.

Read S. John xiii. 12-17.

I. *Know ye what I have done to you.* Ib. 12.

Our Saviour first set them the example, then questioned and instructed them. This is the way to persuade men. And surely I may be convinced of Him who so lowered Himself, not for them only, but for me. *Ib. 16; 1 Tim. iv. 12.*

II. *I have given you an example, &c.* Ib. 15.

His example is always for the imitation of His people; if not, we rob it of its best purpose. The yoke He would have me bear He has borne before me. This is our rule, that we follow Him. *S. John x. 4.*

III. *If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.* Ib. 17.

The knowledge of the will of God brings with it the duty of obedience. What is my knowledge? what are my acts? The servant who knew his Lord's will, but did it not, is beaten with many stripes. *S. Luke xii. 47, 48.*

Text.

Love one another as I have loved you. S. John xv. 12.

Quinquagesima Sunday.

THE INSTITUTION OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST.

Read S. Matt. xxvi. 26, &c.; 1 Cor. xi. 23, &c.
(S. Luke xxii.)

I. *The Lord Jesus, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread.* 1 Cor. xi. 23.

That night, when men were plotting against Him, He was devising good for their souls: He could not be separated from us. What shall separate us from the love of Him? *Rom. viii. 35.*

II. *Take, eat; this is My body.* S. Matt. xxvi. 26.

So God loved the world. (S. John iii. 16.) He gave a new way to restore, to feed, to strengthen His people. If it was love to take our nature into His own, how much more, to renew our own with Himself?

III *Drink ye all of it; for this is My blood of the New Testament.* 1b. 27, 28.

And even Judas was there! All together in the body, but what a difference in the heart and spirit of those around that table! Oh, that I may repress in season those sinful desires by which I may fall! S. Matt. xxiv. 40.

Text.

We being many are one bread, and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread. 1 Cor. x. 17.

For thoughts on the Gospel of the day, see p. 386. For fuller thoughts on the Eucharist, see pp. 213-220.

CHRIST POINTS OUT THE TRAITOR AT SUPPER.

Read S. John xiii. 18-32. (S. Luke xxii.)

I. *Jesus was troubled in spirit, &c.* Ib. 21.

He was troubled at the betrayal of a friend and a companion, and at the hopelessness of his fall. He tries to reclaim him, but in vain. How often, O Lord, hast Thou sought to warn and lead me, but I would not. *Ps.* xli. 9.

II. *And they were exceeding sorrowful, &c.* S. Matt. xxvi. 22. [*Is it I?* S. Mark.]

Unconscious of intended guilt, they distrusted themselves. Well would it be for us not to be high-minded, but fear. Our own opinion of ourselves will not justify us. (1 *Cor.* iv. 4.) Keep Thou Thy servant from presumptuous sins. *Ps.* xix. 13.

III. *He went out, and it was night.* S. John xiii. 30.

He would not hear any longer his Master's voice and instructions. He would not watch and pray; yet I must, if I would not enter into temptation, and in it fall. S. *Matt.* xxvi. 41, &c.

Text.

If our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. 1 S. John iii. 20.

THE DISPUTE OF THE DISCIPLES.

Read S. Luke xxii. 24, 30. (S. Mark ix.)

I. *There was a strife among them which of them should be accounted the greatest. Ib. 24.*

A short time before they sorrowed to think of losing their Master; now, they dispute for that which shall be after He is taken. Do I strive to be accepted of God, or rather to be counted great before men. *S. Luke xvi. 15.*

II. *He that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger. Ib. 26.*

They only are truly great who humble themselves. Such is the law of Christ. What is my law? what is my endeavour? what is my practice? *S. Mark ix. 33, &c.*

III. *I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto Me. Ib. 29.*

Christ received His kingdom through the cross. Am I content so to receive mine? He humbled Himself. Do I follow Him in lowliness and true humility? *Phil. ii. 8.*

Text.

Whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted. S. Luke xiv. 11.

Or for ASH-WEDNESDAY and the following days, the Parable of the Prodigal Son, pp. 369, &c.

Ash-Wednesday.

THE DISCOURSE OF CHRIST AFTER SUPPER.

Read S. John xv. 9-17.

I. *As the Father hath loved Me, so have I loved you. Continue ye in my love. Ib. 9.*

Think, then, of these things. The oneness of Christ and the Father; His love to us; His commandments, which are not grievous; the joy of His manifestation of Himself to those who love Him and keep His commandments. 1 *S. John v. 3; S. John xiv. 21.*

II. *A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another. S. John xiii. 34.*

Where the love of our neighbor is not, neither is there the love of God. Examine thyself. Is thy love like that of Christ to thee, whose body we are, one in Him? 1 *S. John iv. 20; Rom. xii. 5.*

III. *Ask, and ye shall receive. S. John xvi. 24.*

What a promise! another fruit of His merits and intercession; it is through His only name; it is for those who believe in Him, love Him and His, abide in Him. Do I so pray? what are my prayers? what His answers? *S. John xiv. 13.*

Text.

This commandment have we from Him, that he who loveth God love his brother also. 1 S. John iv. 21.

For thoughts on the Gospel of the day, see pp. 282, 288.

CHRIST CONSOLES THE APOSTLES.

Read S. John xiv., xvi.

I. *I will not leave you comfortless.* Ib. 18.

“I will come unto you.” The presence of God is the strength and consolation of His servants. If He leave us for a while, He will again return, that our hearts may rejoice in Him. Is such my joy, my confidence? *Is.* liv. 7, 8. (See also pp. 189, 204.)

II. *Because ye are not of the world, therefore the world hateth you.* S. John xv. 19.

The hatred of the world is another pledge of the Divine favour. They who are not His are let alone to follow earthly delights. Our best delight should be to be assured of the love of God. *S. John xvi. 27.*

III. *If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you.* Ib. 20.

The example of our Lord is another stay and consolation. We too shall conquer, for He has conquered; we too shall have joy, for He has entered into glory. Do I truly seek to embrace the way which He has trod before? *S. John xvi. 33.*

Text.

I will not leave you comfortless. S. John xiv. 18.

CHRIST PRAYS THE FATHER FOR HIS DISCIPLES.

Read S. John xvii.

I. *Keep through Thy Name those whom Thou hast given Me. Ib. 11.*

Why? That "all may be one" in perfect love with God and one another; that they desire and speak the same things—not taken out of the world and its troubles, but preserved in the world from its evils. How do I desire, how follow, such a calling? *Ib. 15–17.*

II. *Thine they were, and Thou gavest them Me, and they have kept Thy word. Ib. 6.*

He prays for His own, because they were committed to Him, the good Shepherd, and because they love Him and keep His word. If thou wouldst have Jesus as thine advocate, see that thou art truly His, and that He is glorified in thee. Is this my aim? *Ps. cxix. 94; S. John xvii. 10.*

III. *Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe, &c. Ib. 20.*

Then did He pray for me also? Yes, blessed Lord, and for all who resist not Thy grace, but seek to abide in Thy love, and in love with one another. Give me, and all, O Lord, this grace, and drive out all worldly and fleshly desires. *Ib. 21.*

Text.

That they all may be one. S. John xvii. 21.

CHRIST GOES FORTH INTO THE GARDEN, AND FORE-
TELLS THE OFFENCE OF HIS DISCIPLES.

Read S. Matt. xxvi. 30-35. (S. Mark xiv.)

I. *He went, as He was wont, to the Mount of Olives.*
S. Luke xxii. 39.

He went forth from the town He had so loved and mourned over, which knew Him not. He went to His own solitude and prayer. Take heed that He leave not thee. Leave me not, O Lord. *Ps.* xxvii. 9.

II. *All ye shall be offended because of Me this night.*
S. Matt. xxvi. 31.

Alas ! it is one thing to be bold beforehand, another thing to remain firm when danger and temptation come. How often have I resolved, and failed in the hour of trial ! *Ib.* 41.

III. *Though all men shall be offended because of Thee, yet will I never be offended.* *Ib.* 33.

This is the danger of earnestness without humility ; a danger not only to ourselves, but drawing others with us. Trust, then, in no way to thyself ; but, in all things, to the grace of God. *S. John* xv. 5 ; *Phil.* iv. 13.

Text.

Be not high-minded, but fear. *Rom.* xi. 20.

First Sunday in Lent.

THE SADNESS OF CHRIST IN THE GARDEN.

Read S. Matt. xxvi. 36-38. (S. Mark.)

I. *He began to be sorrowful and very heavy.* Ib. 37.

But for His desire to suffer, Christ, as God, was incapable of suffering. But He would suffer for us. What was this sadness? Was it for me? for my obstinacy, for my coldness? Did He say for me, "What profit is there in my blood?" *Ps.* xxx. 9.

II. *My soul is . . sorrowful, even unto death.* Ib. 38.

Why these words? That they might know the depth of His sorrow, who had seen the glories of His transfiguration. So we, who have the joys of Mount Tabor, should gird ourselves up to the sorrows of Olivet. So He wills. *S. Matt.* xx. 23.

III. *Tarry ye here, and watch with Me.* Ib.

Learn the value of Christian sympathy: even Christ bids the disciples watch with Him. In the hour of trial and temptation, watching and prayer is our true safeguard. Do I so seek to drive away the evil one? *S. James* iv. 7, 8.

Text.

He hath poured out his soul unto death. Is. liii. 12.

For thoughts on the Gospel of the day, see p. 230.

THE PRAYER OF CHRIST IN THE GARDEN.

Read S. Matt. xxvi. 39-44. (S. Mark xiv.;
S. Luke xxii.)

I. *O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me.* Ib. 39.

Our Lord would have us know that He felt in all things as man; may it be also that He meant His cup to pass from Him to His followers, as they should be able to bear it? Raise, O Lord, my spirit to say, "I will take the cup of salvation," &c. *Ps.* cxvi. 13.

II. *Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt.* Ib.

Our Lord submits to the Divine will, the natural wish of man to be free from sorrow; in all things seeking the Father's glory. Have I learnt thus to subdue my inclinations, and subject them to the will of God? *Acts* xxi. 14.

III. *He went away, and prayed the third time, saying the same words.* Ib. 44.

Twice our Lord left prayer, to warn and exhort His slumbering disciples, and returned to prayer again. Do we so divide our time, by offices of devotion towards God and love towards men, remembering those words, "The greatest of these is charity?" *1 Cor.* xiii. 13.

Text.

Not My will, but Thine be done. S. Luke xxii. 42.

THE AGONY AND BLOODY SWEAT OF CHRIST.

Read S. Luke xxii. 44.

I. *And being in an agony, He prayed more earnestly. Ib.*

Contemplate (*Heb. ii. 18*) this wonderful struggle between the agony of the human nature and the more earnest striving in prayer of the Spirit of Christ. Where is my refuge in affliction and temptation? Is it in prayer; and that only the more earnestly the greater the trial? *S. James v. 13.*

II. *His sweat was as it were great drops of blood. Ib.*

The sin is mine—the infirmity, the sorrow, the suffering, is Jesu's. The earth cries for vengeance (*Gen. iv. 11*); Jesus sprinkles it with His blood. My poor soul is barren; Jesus hath watered and nourished it with the streams of His blood. How miserably do I requite Thee, O my Lord! *Heb. ii. 10.*

III. *There appeared an angel unto Him from heaven strengthening Him. Ib. 43.*

Perseverance in prayer brought even unto the Lord strength and consolation from heaven. Shall it not do so for His sake to me? The Lord of all receives comfort from His creature; shall not I for His sake seek to comfort and sustain His afflicted ones? *Rom. xii. 15.*

Text.

Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow. Lam. i. 12.

AFTER HIS PRAYER CHRIST GOES TO THE DISCIPLES.

Read S. Matt. xxvi. 40-45. (S. Mark, S. Luke.)

I. *He cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep. Ib. 40.*

The Lord visits His servants; desire earnestly that He may visit thee. Yet how often would He find thee sleeping! Let me take shame to myself, receive His gracious rebuke, and seek of Him a spirit of watchfulness. *Ephes. v. 14.*

II. *Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation. Ib. 41.*

The greatest danger was at hand, that of denying or of forsaking Christ. Watching and prayer were then most needful. He who goes not continually to prayer goes assuredly into temptation. *1 Thes. v. 6.*

III. *Sleep on now, and take your rest. Ib. 45.*

What! Now! When the hour is at hand, and the Lord about to be betrayed! Lord, how dost Thou rebuke me, and that justly. Like them, I have failed to watch and pray before the evil hour; leave me not to myself when temptation cometh. *1 Kings viii. 57.*

Text.

Watch, therefore, for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. S. Matt. xxiv. 42.

CHRIST GOES OUT TO MEET JUDAS AND HIS
COMPANY.

Read S. Matt. xxvi. 46-48 (and the other three Gospels).

I. *Rise, let us be going ; behold, he is at hand that doth betray Me.* Ib. 46.

But a little while before, Christ was sorrowful and very heavy : then He prayed, and that thrice. Now He is ready, and forward to go to danger and to death. Here is the secret of fearlessness—meditation, prayer, submission. Have I learnt this? *Rev.* ii. 10.

II. *While He yet spake, lo, Judas, &c.* Ib. 47.

Unhappy man! Victim of one passion—covetousness! One is enough for eternal ruin. Notwithstanding my Christian calling (for Judas was an apostle), if I indulge one sin, where may it not lead me? To many—to ruin. *S. Luke* xi. 26.

III. *He that betrayed Him gave them a sign.* Ib. 48.

Oh, the caution of this wicked man! How may the children of light be ashamed of the industry of the evil in their ways. Judas was fearful of his Master's escape. Am I fearful lest I should lose Him, not from wicked hands, but from a devoted heart? *Ps.* ii. 12.

Text.

Perfect love casteth out fear. 1 John iv. 18.

OF THE KISS OF JUDAS.

Read S. Matt. xxvi. 47-50. (S. Mark, S. Luke.)

I. *He said, Hail, Master, and kissed Him. Ib. 49.*

What awful hypocrisy! "Hail!"—the salutation of friendship. "Master!"—the profession of obedience. A "kiss!"—the token of love. O my soul! have I the outward signs of discipleship of Jesus without its inward spirit? *S. Matt. xxiii. 27.*

II. *Jesus said unto him, Friend, wherefore art thou come? Ib. 50.*

How did our Lord, even at the last, try to bring this wicked man to himself—by soft words, by giving him time for thought, and leading him to consider within himself, "How often has God dealt so with me, and I have heeded Him not! Oh, His mercy!" *S. Luke xiii. 8.*

III. *Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss? S. Luke xxii. 48.*

Once more He expostulates with him: even in the commission of the sin, that voice of warning spake. Does it not so speak to me often and often, yet I hear not. Help, Lord! that I do so no more. *Gen. xxxix. 9.*

Text.

Stand in awe, and sin not. Ps. iv. 4.

CHRIST MAKES HIMSELF KNOWN TO THE MULTITUDE
AND OFFICERS.

Read S. John xviii. 4-9.

I. *Jesus, knowing all things that should come upon Him, went forth.* Ib. 4.

Without His going forth they could do nothing. Their power was only of God. He could avoid them, yet He would not. To bear sufferings which I cannot avoid is not a full proof of my spirit being like His, unless I am also willing. *S. Matt. xxvi. 53.*

II. *Whom seek ye? . . . Jesus of Nazareth . . . I am He.* Ib. 5.

He knew who they sought; but He would make them consider their guilt once more in the repeating that holy name. More than this, He would have them—yea, and me too, seek Him ere He reveals Himself in judgment the great “I AM.” *Is. lv. 6.*

III. *If ye seek Me, let these go their way.* Ib. 8.

What kind care for His own! If of that little band, surely also of the thousands of His faithful ones. He would not have us fall into the hands of His enemy; He would have us saved. Let me trust in Him. *S. Matt. vi. 25-30.*

Text.

The Lord is not willing that any should perish. 2 Pet. iii. 9.

Second Sunday in Lent.

PETER DEFENDING CHRIST.

Read S. John xviii. 10, 11 (and the others).

- I. *Peter having a sword, drew it, and smote the high priest's servant. Ib. 10.*

Such was the zeal of the apostle, yet without discretion—without command. Zeal must be tempered with charity, and seek God's glory, not our own. If I know myself, which do I seek? *S. Luke ix. 55.*

- II. *Put up thy sword into the sheath. The cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it? Ib. 11.*

When others injure us, the cup is from God. We must not resist it, but accept it as from Him. He layeth low; He lifteth up. *1 Sam. ii. 6.*

- III. *He touched his ear and healed him. S. Luke xxii. 51.*

What injury another has done, the Lord, when He will, can repair. Moreover, He teaches (*Rom. xii. 17-21*) to return good for evil; and now heals the ear through which His truth may be received. O Lord, open mine ears, that I may hear Thy voice.

Text.

Let your moderation be known unto all men. Phil. iv. 5.

For thoughts on the Gospel of the day, see pp. 317, 318.

CHRIST IS TAKEN, THE APOSTLES FLEE.

Read S. Matt. xxvi. 50-56. (S. Mark, S. John.)

I. *Are ye come out as against a thief? . . . I sat daily with you teaching in the temple.* Ib. 55.

He had only snatched souls from Satan—now they would take Him. They too had heard Him. Where were the fruits of their hearing? Where is the fruit of mine? But this was their (S. Luke xxii. 53) hour. When mine comes, may it be my committal into His hands.

II. *Then came they and laid hands on Jesus.* Ib. 50.

The breath of our nostrils, the Anointed, is taken—taken for our sins. But the day of avenging will come—Oh, that it be not on us! Now let me lay hands on myself, that I sin not against Him. Of me—yea, of me, may He complain. Ps. cxix. 61.

III. *Then all the disciples forsook Him and fled.* Ib. 56.

Where are those words, “Let us go that we may die with Him.”—“Though I die with Thee, yet will I not deny Thee.” (S. John xi. 16; S. Matt. xxvi. 35.) The love of ourselves is the first step to deserting Christ. Trust not thyself, thy words, thy resolutions. What are thy actions?

Text.

Shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. S. James ii. 18.

JESUS IS FIRST LED TO ANNAS.

*Read S. John xviii. 12-24.*I. *And (they) led Him away to Annas. Ib. 13.*

What a different scene in Jerusalem this day to our Lord's triumphal entry but a few days since? How changeable is man! Do I, can I trust in him? Who caused this disgrace? O my soul, remember His sorrows, and bear thine own in silence. *Ps. clxvi. 3.*

II. *The high priest then asked Jesus of His disciples and of His doctrine. Ib. 19.*

The Judge arraigned before the criminal! God judged of men! the Just One of sinners! Well may it be to me a small matter to be judged of others. His charity was indeed patient and long suffering. What is mine? *1 Cor. iv. 3.*

III. *I spake openly . . . Ask them which heard Me. Ib. 20, 21.*

His disciples had fled. Of them, in charity, He says nothing; of Himself He speaks boldly. So may all who have a conscience void of offence. Is mine such that I may trust to the righteous judgment of God? *Ps. l. 6.*

Text.

He that judgeth me is the Lord. 1 Cor. iv. 4.

THE FACE OF CHRIST SMITTEN.

Read S. John xviii. 22-24. (Job xvi. 5-11.)

I. *One of the officers which stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand. Ib. 22.*

Christ, our Lord and our God, smitten of His miserable creature! Yet He avenges not Himself, but suffers. How unlike me, who suffer, when I suffer, justly, yet strive too often to be avenged! 1 *Pet.* ii. 20.

II. *If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil, but if well, why smitest thou Me? Ib. 23.*

Our Lord spake—yet meekly, and with reason. He had borne scourging with patience and silence. Now He speaks, an example to us of quiet (1 *Pet.* iii. 14-18), patient, gentle expostulation. His gentle words are instead of my harsh ones. My evil speakings have smitten Him.

III. *Annas had sent Him bound unto Caiaphas the high priest. Ib. 24.*

So Christ is sent from one to another bound, smitten, reviled, despised, ill-treated for me, for my sins, for my salvation! Lord, give me true sorrow, true love. *Is.* liii. 5.

Text.

They have smitten me upon the cheek reproachfully. Though I speak, my grief is not assuaged; and though I forbear, what am I eased? Job xvi. 10, 6.

OF THE FALSE WITNESS AGAINST JESUS.

Read S. Matt. xxvi. 59-63. (S. Mark.)

I. *They sought false witness against Jesus, to put Him to death. Ib. 59.*

They determined on His death—they desired an excuse for it. How often have I resolved to act, and looked afterwards for a seemly reason! Let me cast off this veil; it will then appear what my actions really are. *S. Matt. x. 26.*

II. *But found none. Ib. 60.*

So blameless was the life of Christ. Oh, that the accuser of the brethren could find nothing whereof to accuse me. But in Jesus is perfection. In Him is no fault. He only is without sin. *S. John xix. 4.*

III. *Answereth Thou nothing? What is it which these witness against Thee? Ib. 62.*

There needed no answer, for their testimony agreed not (*S. Mark xiv. 59*). Those accusations need no answer which have the answer of a holy life. Do I not often excuse, when I inwardly must accuse, myself? *Gen. iii. 10-12.*

Text.

Such an High Priest became us who is holy, harmless, undefiled. Heb. vii. 26.

CHRIST ADJURED BY CAIAPHAS AND CONDEMNED.

Read S. Matt. xxvi. 62-66 ; S. Mark xiv. 62.

I. *Tell us whether thou be the Christ. Jesus said, I AM. Ib. 63 ; ib. 62.*

This question was not for truth, but only to seek ground of condemnation. Yet our Lord answers. He confesses God, though it should bring death. How much do I need such boldness for the confession of Him whom I profess to serve. *S. Matt. x. 32.*

II. *Hereafter ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. Ib. 64.*

Thus our Lord hints to His unrighteous judge His twofold advent—His coming as man, His future coming to judgment. If tempted to unjust judgment, remember that day—that judge! *Rom. xiv. 10.*

III. *Then the high priest rent his clothes, &c. Ib. 65.*

One more act of hypocrisy and of pretended care for the honour of God. Then all pronounced Him guilty. And indeed He was made guilty for me. In Him may my guilt be pardoned. *2 Cor. v. 21.*

Text.

Rend your heart and not your garments. Joel ii. 13.

OF THE INSULTS BORNE BY CHRIST THAT NIGHT.

Read S. Matt. xxvi. 66-68. (S. Luke, S. John.)

I. *Then did they spit in His face.* Ib. 67.

Look, O Lord, on the face of Thine Anointed, so insulted; in Him see Thyself; in these insults see my sins. By these, my offences are done away. Make me to love and follow Him who bore thus all reproach. 2 Cor. xii. 10.

II. *When they had blindfolded Him, they struck Him on the face.* S. Luke xxii. 64.

Fools, who knew not God, and thought they could be hidden from Him. He is the Searcher of hearts. He knows mine, and all my provocations of Him. 1 Chron. xxviii. 9.

III. *And many other things blasphemously spake they against Him.* Ib. 65.

And all these He bore. He gave Himself into their hands; oh, that I could give myself into His, to bear, to suffer, for His sake all that He sends me, yea, and to rest in Him for salvation. Is. liii. 7.

Text.

Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. S. Matt. v. 39.

Thir'd Sunday in Lent.

THE FIRST DENIAL OF CHRIST BY PETER.

Read S. Matt. xxvi. 58 *and* 69-75. (S. Mark, S. Luke, S. John.)

I. *But Peter followed Him afar off.* Ib. 58.

Love made him follow; fear of men, the beginning of backsliding, kept him afar off. The more slowly we follow God, the farther off He becomes. Have I left my first love? *Rev.* ii. 4.

II. *Peter stood with them (sat, S. Matt.), and warmed himself.* S. John xviii. 18.

Here is the fruit of languidly following Christ. First standing, then sitting, then seeking bodily comfort and ease. Would I avoid such dangers? Mingle not with those that know not God. 1 *Cor.* xv. 33.

III. *But he denied before them all.* S. Matt. xxvi. 70.

Among the apostles Peter had made a good confession—Thou art the Christ. Now, among the wicked and the scoffer, he denies his Lord, fearful even of the voice of a maiden. Have I lived among such? Among such have I fallen? *P.s.* i. 1.

Text.

The love of many shall wax cold. S. Matt. xxiv. 12.

For thoughts on the Gospel of the Day, see p. 298.

THE SECOND AND THIRD DENIAL BY PETER.

Read S. Matt. xxvi. 71, or S. Mark xiv. 66, &c.

- I. *Another maid saw him, and said, This fellow was also . . . And again he denied. Ib. 72.*

This time "with an oath!" So one sin brings another, and those who "despise little things fall by little and little." Well may I fear with such an example, and have no confidence in myself, but in God. *Phil. ii. 12.*

- II. *A little after . . . He began to curse and to swear, saying, I know not this man. S. Mark xiv. 71.*

Ashamed of his Lord, he not only denies but blasphemes—mingles with the company and language of the wicked. Have not I from fear of others, or false shame, both borne in others and done myself things hateful to my Lord? What is the reward? *S. Luke ix. 26.*

- III. *And immediately the cock crew . . . and the Lord looked upon Peter. S. Matt. and S. Luke.*

Even in the midst of his sin that eye of mercy turned upon him! How often has it looked on me, and bid me repent! Oh, that I could weep with Peter for all my sins, and, like him, truly repent. *Cant. i. 6.*

Text.

Oh, look Thou upon me, and be merciful unto me. Ps. cxix. 132.

CHRIST IS LED TO PILATE.

Read S. Matt. xxvii. 1, 2 (and the others).

I. *All the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus.* Ib. 1.

Three times they had taken counsel. In the first they disagreed; in the second they doubted. Now all agree, thus step by step giving way to evil and ungodly counsels. Oh, that step by step we counselled for good, how we might serve the Lord! S. Luke xvi. 8.

II. *The whole multitude of them arose, and led Him unto Pilate.* S. Luke xxiii. 1.

This was very early. Many had been sleepless, mocking their Redeemer; now they arise with one accord. Have I the spirit of watching to serve Him, or of rising betimes to do my Maker's will, my morning prayer, my daily duty? Ps. lxiii. 1.

III. *They themselves went not into the judgment-hall, lest they should be defiled.* S. John xviii. 28.

Miserable hypocrites! caring for an outward cleanness, cherishing inward defilement and abomination. Such is the Christian who strives to appear holy, and preserve outward forms, neglecting the spirit and the life within. Am I such or no? S. Matt. xxiii. 27.

Text.

O my soul, come not thou into their secret, unto their assembly . . . be not thou united. Gen. xlix. 6.

THE DESPAIR OF JUDAS.

Read S. Matt. xxvii. 3-10.

I. *I have sinned, in that I have betrayed the innocent blood.* Ib. 4.

Perhaps he thought his Lord would escape by a miracle. Thus beforehand men make light of their sins; afterwards come shame and remorse. Had he attended to those words, Friend, wherefore art thou come? Oh, that I attended to every warning! 1 *Thes. v. 19.*

II. *What is that to us? see thou to that.* Ib.

The men of the world obtain their object: they no longer care for those through whom it is obtained. This is the sure penalty of pleasing men while we offend God, We cannot please them and truly serve God. Which is my aim? *Gal. i. 10.*

III. *And he cast down the pieces of silver in the Temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself.* Ib. 5.

What an end for an apostle! What a consequence of indulging covetous desires! So every passion strengthens unless suppressed. The beginnings of all evil are but small; help me, Lord, to watch against them. *Prov. xvii. 14.*

Text.

No covetous man hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Eph. v. 5.

CHRIST BROUGHT TO PILATE.

Read S. John xviii. 28-33 (and the others).

- I. *What accusation bring ye against this man? They said, If He were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered Him up.* Ib. 29.

Christ the holy, the harmless, the undefiled,—called a malefactor! And by whom? They who had but lately said, “He hath done all things well.” I adore Thee, O my Lord, my Benefactor, my God! S. Mark vii. 37.

- II. *Take ye Him, and judge Him according to your law.* Ib. 31.

So soon he gave up our Lord, without any sufficient answer from His accusers. They pretend (*ib.*) a want of power to judge Him. Do I ever let others do for me the wrong which I fear to do myself? But God knoweth the heart. Jer. xvii. 10.

- III. *They began to accuse Him, saying, We found this fellow perverting the nation, &c.* S. Luke xxiii. 2.

He who had healed their diseases—had bid them render to Cæsar his due—had hid Himself lest they should make Him a king (S. John vi. 15)—now, accused of the contrary, holds His peace. Oh, my soul, so often made wrathful, even by a just charge, now learn of Him—be humble, be patient.

Text.

He was delivered for our offences. Rom. iv. 25.

CHRIST EXAMINED BEFORE PILATE.

Read S. Matt. xxvii. 11-14; S. John xviii. 33-35.

I. *And Jesus stood before the governor. Ib. 11.*

Once more the Lord of all stands before the judgment-seat of a creature, in meekness, in humility, even in respect for the office of the ruler. Learn from Him how to conduct thyself when unjustly reprov'd or blamed by any one set over thee. *S. Luke xxi. 14.* But if justly?

II. *Art Thou the king of the Jews? Jesus said unto him, Thou sayest. Ib.*

A question asked in half mockery! Answered by Christ to Pilate and to all in earnest, "Thou sayest." Yea, how often daily do I call Him my Lord! How little do I cast off the cords of my sins! How little, how unwillingly do I serve Him as such! *Ps. ii. 3; S. Luke xix. 14.*

III. *Thine own nation hath delivered Thee unto me. What hast thou done! S. John xviii. 35.*

Let me answer for Him. He hath made all things that are good; He hath done no evil. But if I answer for myself, I am ashamed and confounded. Where are the talents, where are the graces, where the opportunities He has given me? *Ps. cvi. 6.*

Text.

He hath done all things well. We have done amiss, and have dealt wickedly. S. Mark vii. 37; 2 Chron. vi. 37.

CHRIST'S KINGDOM NOT OF THIS WORLD.

Read S. John xviii. 36-38.

I. *My kingdom is not of this world.* Ib. 36.

But yet it is the kingdom of kingdoms, and He the King of kings. He reigns in the humble, meek, and contrite heart; and He shall reign in mine. Thou, O Lord, art, even in Thy poverty, my God; and to Thee shall every knee bow. *Phil. ii. 6-11.*

II. *Art Thou a king, then?* Ib. 37.

Our Lord denied not that He was a king, but confessed it. Let us believe Him to be, and receive Him as such. Do I make Him so when passions strive for the rule over me? Help me, Lord, then, to say, "Thou art my King." *Ps. v. 2.*

III. *Pilate saith unto Him, What is truth? And when he had said this he went out.* Ib. 38.

A question we all need ask. But, unlike Pilate, we ought to wait for the answer, and so know the truth. That inquiry is not from the heart which only begins, but does not persevere in the search. What is my habit? *S. Matt. xiii. 20-22.*

Text.

I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. S. John xiv. 6.

Fourth Sunday in Lent.

CHRIST IS SENT TO HEROD.

Read S. John xviii. 38. (S. Matt., S. Mark, S. Luke.)

I. *I find in Him no fault at all.* Ib.

How could fault be found in the Holiest! Yet in Him may not I find my sins the cause both of suffering and death? Oh, that I might hate myself and love Him more, and cease from adding to the load He bore for me? *Is.* liii. 6.

II. *The chief priests accused Him of many things, but He answered nothing.* S. Mark xv. 3.

Trusting to their own names and offices for proof, not to the truth. His life was the proof of their falsehood; silence His best defence. Have I so lived that, though I were much accused, little could be proved, and my life might speak for me? 1 *Pet.* iii. 12-16.

III. *As soon as he knew that He belonged unto Herod's jurisdiction he sent Him.* S. Luke xxiii. 7.

His conscience dared not condemn Jesus. His fears of the people prevented his setting Him free; he wished to leave it to another, careless of the Lord. When we leave the cause of God, and think of ourselves, we are not faithful disciples: our fall is at hand. *S. Luke* xiv. 26.

Text.

He was afflicted and oppressed, yet He opened not His mouth. *Is.* liii. 7.

For thoughts on the Gospel of the day, see p. 320.

CHRIST MOCKED BY HEROD.

Read S. Luke xxiii. 8-11.

I. *When Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad. . . . He hoped to have seen some miracle. Ib. 8.*

Were these the joy and desire of a pious man longing for true knowledge of Jesus? No; but of mere curiosity. If I find little or no profit from reading and meditation, may it not be that I seek mere knowledge, not the stirring up of holy affections? 1 Cor. viii. 1-3.

II. *He questioned with Him in many words. Ib. 9.*

And Jesus "answered him not." Here, indeed, was a miracle, if Herod could have perceived it. A far greater thing (*Job xi. 1-6*) than we often accomplish, would be silence in the midst of reproach and debate, and concealing our power when not for the glory of God to exert it.

III. *Herod, with his men of war, set Him at nought, and mocked Him. Ib. 11.*

Thus is eternal Wisdom humbled, that my pride may learn to be abased, and I in the end, through Him, be exalted. And yet the foolish things of this world I embrace; the wise things of eternity I neglect. God, teach me otherwise. 1 Cor. i. 27.

Text.

Ye have set at nought all my counsel. . . . I will mock when your fear cometh. Prov. i. 25, 26.

BARABBAS PREFERRED TO CHRIST.

Read S. Matt. xxvii. 15-23; S. Luke xxiii. 15-19.

I. *Whom will ye that I release unto you, Barabbas, or Jesus?* S. Matt. xxvii. 17.

Am I shocked at this insult to my Lord, that He should even be compared with a malefactor? Do I consider how often I commit the same fault, when I doubt between the love of Him and of some earthly creature or appetite? *Rom. i. 25.*

II. *The chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas.* Ib. 20.

And Christ had no advocate (*Prov. xiv. 20*); who is ours? Oh, that we now, at least, might plead for Him in our hearts, mortifying, nay, crucifying the Barabbas within us, and seeking for the life of Jesus in our souls.

III. *And they cried out all at once, saying.* S. Luke xxiii. 18.

“Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas.” Lord, save me from this sin; let me never drive Thee away, nor prefer honour, the world, or the flesh, to my God. *Acts iii. 14, 15.*

Text.

Let not sin reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. *Rom. vi. 12.*

PILATE YIELDS TO THE FURY OF THE PEOPLE.

Read S. Matt. xxvii. 22-25.

I. *They all say unto him, Let Him be crucified. Ib.*

The more Pilate yielded, the more the people demanded, the less he could resist. If we give but little way to the things of the flesh and of sense, they grow stronger, our resolutions weaker. Lord, make me love Thee as much as they despised and hated Thee. *Exod. xxiii. 2.*

II. *I am innocent of the blood of this just person, see ye to it. Ib. 24.*

How could he be innocent in heart who would not defend the guiltless Saviour! He desired to release Him; but self-love and his own safety were his motives; so he fell. So shall I, if, professing to serve God, I serve myself. Where shall the fearful be? *Rev. xxi. 8.*

III. *His blood be on us and on our children. Ib. 25.*

How little they thought of the multitude of souls who would desire to be sprinkled with that blood of cleansing! Not the vengeance of Thy blood, dear Lord, but its cleansing and healing streams flow over my soul, and wash my sins away. *Heb. xii. 24.*

Text.

He that loveth his life shall lose it. John xii. 25.

CHRIST SCOURGED.

Read S. John xix. 1 (and each of the others).

I. *Then Pilate, therefore, took Jesus.* Ib. 1.

He willingly submitted to yet further suffering and disgrace. We might think much of the pain, yet more of the anguish of mind, of the Holy One of God. Who—who is the cause? Oh, that in self-accusation I could willingly submit as He submitted for me! *Is.* l. 6.

II. *And scourged Him.* Ib.

And this He bore! Here is love of sinners—here is deep humility—here is unwearied constancy and patience—here cheerful conformity to the Divine will! Bless, adore Him, and compare thyself in adversity with Him. *Ps.* xxxviii. 13.

III. *The plowers plowed upon my back, and made long furrows.* *Ps.* cxxix. 3.

Again, as in the circumcision and the agony, is Jesu's blood poured forth for us. With what pain and torture! No more let me tread that blood (*Heb.* x. 29) under foot by sin; no more let me pamper my body, in the remembrance of His scourged body.

Text.

With His stripes we are healed. *Is.* liii. 5.

JESUS CROWNED WITH THORNS.

Read S. Matt. xxvii. 27-31. (John.)

I. *They stripped Him, and put on Him a scarlet robe.*
Ib. 28.

Thus confusion, ridicule, ignominy, are heaped upon Him. The pomps of the world disgrace Christ, yet we choose them. And what is this scarlet robe? Is it not the covering of my sins (*Is. i. 18*) put on Him? *Ib. liii. 6.*

II. *And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon His head.* *Ib. 29.*

“Thou crownedst Him with glory and worship.” In His kingdom, no crown is without a thorn. The members of a thorn-crowned Head may not rest in earthly ease and self-indulgence. Do I? 2 *Tim. ii. 5, 12.*

III. *And a reed in His right hand.* *Ib.*

They mocked, they smote, they ridiculed Thee. Yet Thou wert their King. Take me in Thine hand, O Lord; use me as Thou wilt, so as I bow my soul before Thee, receive injuries with patience, suffer in Thy name, give Thee glory. *S. Matt. v. 39.*

Text.

King of kings, and Lord of lords. *Rev. xix. 16.*

MY LORD—MY KING—MY GOD!

BEHOLD THE MAN!

Read S. John xix. 4-7.

I. *Behold, I bring Him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in Him. Ib. 4.*

Except in us, there was no cause against Him. Behold Him! Is this the face that shone on Mount Tabor, now to behold "the very scorn of men," but inwardly fair beyond the children of men? Conform me, Lord, to Thy likeness. *Ps. xxii. 6; xlv. 2.*

II. *Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man! Ib. 5.*

Perhaps in pity, that the multitude might relent. But to me the Father says, Behold the man! Christ, thy help (*S. John v. 7*), thy Physician (*Ps. ciii. 3*); thyself too little trusting in Him (*Ps. lii. 7*); the good Samaritan, who looks upon thee in mercy.

III. *When they . . . saw Him, they cried out, saying, Crucify Him, crucify Him! Ib. 6.*

So unmoved is our evil nature. And why crucify Him? "Because He made Himself the Son of God." Would I be such in Him? I too must be crucified to the world; the old man must die that the new may live to God. *Gal. v. 24.*

Text.

There is one Mediator between God and men,
THE MAN *Christ Jesus. 1 Tim. ii. 5.*

Fifth Sunday in Lent.

PILATE AGAIN IN THE JUDGMENT-HALL.

Read S. John xix. 8-12.

I. *When he heard that saying he was the more afraid, and went again into the judgment-hall. Ib. 8, 9.*

He had been afraid of the people—now of God. Which shall prevail? Had he cast off that sinful fear of man this might have prevailed. He gave way then; now he cannot resist. Resist evil at the beginning, otherwise there is no safety. *S. Matt. xii. 29.*

II. *Knowest thou not that I have power? Ib. 10, 11.*

What! man have power to “release” or “crucify” the God of all! So he indulged another passion, pride. Let me take warning. Think, then, of the answer of Christ. Remember that all power is of God; of Him alone come all things. I am a poor instrument in His hands. *Is. xli. 1-4.*

III. *From thenceforth Pilate sought to release Him. Ib. 12.*

Still he listened to the Jews, not to God; He feared not to lose the friendship of God but of Cæsar. Which is my fear? To which do I hearken? Which do I chose? *S. James iv. 4.*

Text.

There were they in great fear where no fear was. Ps. liii. v.

For thoughts on the Gospel of the day, see p. 346.

PILATE'S SENTENCE UPON CHRIST.

*Read S. John xix. 13-16.*I. *He saith unto the Jews, Behold your king ! Ib. 14.*

Yet half in ridicule. He was only too ready to hear their cry, "Away with Him"—"Crucify Him!" When once we hearken to the voice of passion, all is over. Let me acknowledge Thee, my Lord, condemned of men, yet set of God on high. *Ps. ii. 6.*

II. *He saith unto them, Shall I crucify your king ! Ib. 15.*

Once again he speaks for the Innocent—yet more for himself. "We have no king but Cæsar" will turn him. And they in their blindness acknowledge the tyrant who binds—not the Redeemer who sets free. Which do I acknowledge? Which do I serve? *Ps. lxxiv. 12.*

III. *Then delivered he Him therefore unto them to be crucified. Ib 16.*

A sentence unjust according to his own words; cruel, because (*S. Luke xxiii. 24*) he gives Him up to the fury of opponents. Yet Christ receives it meekly, as from the Father—willingly, as for me! Oh, that I could so submit myself to my God! *1 Pet. iv. 19.*

Text.

O Lord of hosts, my King and my God. Ps. lxxxiv. 3.

CHRIST BEARING HIS CROSS.

Read S. John xix. 17. (Simon of Cyrene, S. Matt., S. Mark, S. Luke.)

I. *And He, bearing His cross, went forth.* Ib.

That cross, borne so willingly, made heavier by my sins! Its disgrace did not hinder His soul, nor its weight His weakened body from bearing it. Yet how do I, body and soul, shrink from each cross! Follow Him. He will give thee strength. S. John xii. 26; Ps. lxxxvi. 16.

II. *And as they came out, they found . . . Simon . . . him they compelled to bear His cross.*
S. Matt. xxvii. 32.

This was an honour, to suffer with Jesus. If so to one compelled, how much more to those who are willing! Henceforth may I be hindered by nothing—shame, evil counsel, fear—from suffering with Him. Glory awaits me. 2 Tim. ii. 11, 12.

III. *And there followed Him a great company.*
S. Luke xxiii. 27.

Some from curiosity, some from ridicule, some to crucify Him—who that they might follow Him? Through all the way He wavered not. Not a day only, but all my life long let me take up and bear my cross. S. Matt. xvi. 24.

Text.

Follow thou Me. S. John xxi. 22.

JESUS CRUCIFIED.

Compare each Gospel. (Numb. xxi. 9; S. John iii. 14.)

- I. *They gave Him vinegar (wine, S. Mark) to drink, mingled with gall; and . . . He would not drink. S. Matt. xxvii. 34.*

He just tasted its bitterness. The world offers its wine, but it is mingled with poison, and brings bitterness. (*Prov. xxiii. 32*) Wine mingled with myrrh is like good actions with an evil intention, all worthless, offensive, vile. What are my intentions? *S. James iii. 13, 14.*

- II. *There they crucified Him. S. Luke xxiii. 33.*

He brought no earthly goods with Him into the world—He took none out. Stripped of all, He suffered for my sins! And I too, if I would be crucified to the world with Him, must have nothing but Him. Think of His anguish—His shame—His sacrifice—His love! How shall it be repaid, O my soul? *Ps. cxvi. 12, 13.*

- III. *And two other with Him; on either side one, and Jesus in the midst. S. John xix. 18.*

My Lord is numbered among the malefactors! Surely my place was rather there. One of the three is hardened and unrepentant; one a sinner rescued as a brand from the burning! One only innocent—the Son of God. If I suffer, may it be with Him. *1 Pet. iv. 14, 15.*

Text.

Crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I. Gal. ii. 20.

THEY CAST LOTS FOR HIS GARMENTS, AND REVILE HIM
AS KING OF THE JEWS.

Read S. John xix. 19-24; S. Matt. xxvii. 35-43.
(S. Luke.)

I. *Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it.* Ib. 24.

So they fulfilled the prophecy (*Ps.* xxii. 18). Some have thought that this was the inner garment. Our outward man may fail (*2 Cor.* iv. 16); our inward affections may not be divided. True believers are the nearest to Christ. His garments—let them not be divided.

II. *Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews.* Ib. 19.

Dying, He received from His enemies the title which the wise men gave at His birth. Yet they desired not really to acknowledge Him. I will acknowledge Him—Jesus, my King, my Saviour! I will cleave to His cross. *1 Cor.* i. 23, 24; *Acts* iv. 12.

III. *They reviled Him.* S. Matt. xxvii. 39.

Bidding Him, if He were what He said—if He could save Himself—if God cared for Him—"come down," and they would believe. For these causes, and for my sake, He came not down, persevering to the end in the cross. Do I also, as a true son of God, strive to follow Him in endurance? *S. Matt.* xxiv. 13.

Text.

Charity never faileth—endureth all things. *1 Cor.* xiii.

THE WORDS OF JESUS UPON THE CROSS.

1. *For His murderers.* 2. *The penitent thief.*

Read S. Luke xxiii. 34-43.

- I. FATHER, FORGIVE THEM: FOR THEY KNOW NOT WHAT THEY DO. Ib. 34.

He pleads for others, who spake nothing for Himself—pleads His own Sonship, their alien and ignorant condition. Hence may I hope for myself; He intercedes for me. 1 *John* ii. 1, 2.

- II. *Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom.* Ib. 42.

The penitent confesses his sin, acknowledges Christ, remonstrates with the wicked, prays for mercy, asks no relief from present suffering, receives his cross in meekness! What grace Thou givest, O Lord! Give, O give me the same. *P.s.* xxv. 7.

- III. VERILY I SAY UNTO THEE, TO-DAY SHALT THOU BE WITH ME IN PARADISE. Ib. 43.

The Saviour gives more than is asked. "This day;" not hereafter only. Not remembrance only; but his presence "with Me." Do I desire to be with Him in paradise? I must here be crucified with Him. Am I in heart and affections? 2 *Tim.* ii. 11.

Text.

The one taken—the other left. S. Matt. xxiv. 40.

THE WORDS OF JESUS UPON THE CROSS.

3. *His mother and the beloved disciple.**Read S. John xix. 25-27.*

I. *There stood by the cross of Jesus His mother.* Ib. 25.

Who can imagine the agony of that hour to the Mother of Christ? Surely this was the sword that should pierce through her soul! Yet she "stood," though a sad, still a firm and willing witness of the will of her God, patiently waiting on Him! *Eph. vi. 13.*

II. WOMAN, BEHOLD THY SON. Ib. 26.

Much she needed consolation, so Christ afforded it to her. To whom did He commend her? To one who had leaned on His bosom, who now stands by the cross. By such an one Christ, as it were, replaced Himself. In such we may see Him; with such have fellowship. Here is a test for me. *S. Luke x. 29, &c.*

III. BEHOLD THY MOTHER. Ib. 27.

To one who left his father to follow Christ (*S. Mark. i. 19*), Christ bequeathed his Mother. If for love of Him we abandon earthly affections and ties, He will give us spiritual ones. We may thus be brethren and children of His saints in Him. *S. Mark x. 29.*

Text.

Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end. *S. John xiii. 1.*

Palm Sunday.

THE WORDS OF JESUS UPON THE CROSS.

4. *Forsaken of God.* 5. *Athirst.*

Read S. Matt. xxvii. 45-49; S. John xix. 28, 29.

I. MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAST THOU FORSAKEN ME? Ib. 46. (Ps. xxii. 1.)

From these awfully mysterious words we learn that Christ was a while deprived even of Divine assistance. What that was to Him we know not. Oh, that we never sought from man what He had not even from God. *Jer.* xvii. 5.

II. I THIRST. S. John xix. 28.

In all things He would obey the Father's will, the Father's word. So was it written (*Ps.* lxix. 21), and His desire was to fulfil it all; and this for our sakes; such was His love. *Ps.* cx. 7.

III. *They filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to His mouth.* S. John xix. 29.

And so may we deal with our blessed Lord when we give Him carnal instead of spiritual affections; the dregs of our days instead of the vigour of life. How deeply drank He the cup of bitterness for me. How have I requited Him? S. *Luke* xv. 18.

Text.

My soul thirsteth for God. Ps. xlii. 2.

For thoughts upon the Gospels of this week, see the foregoing pages from Septuagesima. See also p. 414.

Monday in Holy Week.

THE WORDS OF JESUS UPON THE CROSS.

6. *The finished work.* 7. *The commended spirit.*

Read S. John xix. 30; S. Luke xxiii. 46.

I. IT IS FINISHED. Ib. 30.

What God had willed, what Jesus had undertaken, all is done—all! For His glory—for our salvation. Oh, that I could sufficiently praise and love Him. What at my last hour shall I say? Unprofitable, unworthy follower of my Lord. S. *Luke* xvii. 10; 2 *Tim.* iv. 7.

II. FATHER, INTO THY HANDS I COMMEND MY SPIRIT.
Ib. 46.

In filial confidence to His Father—into His hands, that only quiet and secure place—not His body, but His spirit. Would I follow His example? Do I love as a son? Is my will resigned to His? Is my body crucified, and my soul set free for Him? 1 S. *Pet.* iv. 19.

III. And He bowed His head, and gave up the ghost.
Ib. 30.

Oh, the mystery! The death of God! They only who know the extent of Divine love can compass this. It is for me too! Truly are we bought with a price (1 *Cor.* vi. 20), a countless price! Incline, oh, incline, my head, my heart, my all, to Thy ways, O Lord. *Ps.* cxix. 112.

Text.

My meat is do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work. S. John iv. 34.

Tuesday in Holy Week.

THE MIRACULOUS EVENTS AT CHRIST'S DEATH.

Read S. Matt. xxvii. 51-53. (S. Mark, S. Luke.)

I. *The veil of the temple was rent in twain.* Ib. 51.

The ancient law was abolished; the veil no more drawn over the ordinances of God: this the death of Christ should work in me; the abolishing the old law of my fleshly members; the freeing of my spiritual sight from all false (*Is. lix. 2*) cloaks and coverings. *1 Cor. v. 7.*

II. *The earth did quake and the rocks rent.* Ib.

Nature sorrowed for its Lord. Why do not I? I am but earth! Is it that I love the things of the earth more than Jesus? (*S. Luke xvi. 13.*) Is my heart as a rock that I cannot? Give me, O Lord, a mortified body, a rended heart. Then shall I also mourn.

III. *The graves were opened.* Ib. 52.

In dying He destroyed death. The saints arose. His death brings life to His people. Has it laid open the recesses of my conscience? Has it exposed (*S. Matt. xxiii. 27*) all my false ways? Has it set me free to walk in newness of life? *Heb. ii. 14.*

Text.

A new and living way . . . through the veil, that is to say, His flesh. *Heb. x. 20.*

Wednesday in Holy Week.

THE EMOTIONS PRODUCED IN SEVERAL PERSONS BY
THE DEATH OF CHRIST.

Read 1 Cor. i. 18-31.

I. *The centurion . . . said, Truly this man was the Son of God.* S. Mark xv. 39.

From the natural fear of the outward tokens of God's majesty, he passed to the true fear and acknowledgment of God Himself. Others saw and heard, but were not really moved. He was moved, for God touched his heart. In the depths of Christ's humility he confessed his Lord. 1 Cor. i. 18.

II. *And all the people that came together . . . smote their breasts and returned.* S. Luke xxiii. 48.

These were better than the Chief Priests and Pharisees, who were not moved at all; yet they made no confession, for they came together for a sight. Do I realise, more than they, Christ dying for me? To go and to return is of little avail; I must abide with Him. S. Luke x. 30-32.

III. *And all His acquaintance and the women . . . stood afar off, beholding these things.* Ib. 49.

Peter stood afar off and denied Christ. It is better to be near Him; yet they stood where they might see Jesus and be seen of Him. God give me grace ever to look upon Him, the crucified, to draw near to Him, and be healed. Is. lvii. 18, 19.

Text.

Now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. Eph. ii. 13.

Maundy Thursday.

THE PIERCED SIDE OF JESUS.

Read S. John xix. 31-37. (Num. xx. ; Zech. xii. ; Ps. xxii.)

1. *They saw that He was dead already, (and) they brake not His legs. Ib. 33.*

He was found dead before their expectation, hastening to perfect our redemption ; so was another prophecy fulfilled in Him. Well would it be if, when our enemies beset us, we be found already crucified unto the world, dead unto sin, no longer open to their temptation. S. Luke xii. 50.

- II. *One of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side. Ib. 34.*

Oh, the fountain of the love and mercy of Jesus ! laid bare, opened for me ! He gave His feet to Magdalene to caress, His hand to His Disciples to use in His name (Acts iii. 7) ; and now His heart is poured forth for His sinful, erring children. Is. lxvi. 12.

- III. *And forthwith came thereout blood and water. Ib.*

Types, as many have believed, of the Sacraments of His own appointment, the water with which we are washed, the blood with which we are cleansed and fed. How He has loved us ! Oh, that I could love Him freely, and as He has loved me ! 1 John v. 6.

Text.

He opened the rock of stone, and the waters flowed out, so that rivers ran in the dry places. Ps. cv. 41.

Good Friday.

THE CONTEMPLATION OF JESUS CRUCIFIED.

Read S. John iii. 14, 15. (Num. xxi. 6-9.)

I. *Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto My sorrow.* Lam. i. 12.

They pierced My hands and My feet. (*Ps.* xxii. 16.) They gnashed upon Me with their teeth. (*Ps.* xxxv. 16.) I was numbered with the transgressors. (*Is.* liii. 12.) I looked for some to take pity, but there was none. (*Ps.* lxix. 20.) What profit is there in My blood? (*Ps.* xxx. 9.) Consider these things.

II. *What are these wounds in Thine hands?* Zech. xiii. 6.

If I ask Thee, O Lord, Thou hast already answered: "Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends." Is it I? Yea, Lord, in me. Truly Thou hast loved me, and given Thyself for me. (*Eph.* v. 25.) Do I love Thee? Grant me to say in truth, Lord, Thou knowest all things, Thou knowest that I love Thee. S. John xxi. 17.

III. *Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price.* 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20.

For Thou hast died for all, that they who live, live no more to themselves, but to Him who died for them. (2 Cor. v. 15.) What shall I render unto Thee, O Lord? Take me, oh, take me, and make me Thine own.

Text.

Look unto Me, and be ye saved. Is. xlv. 22.

Easter-Eve.

CHRIST TAKEN DOWN FROM THE CROSS AND BURIED.

Compare all the four Gospels. (Is. liii. 9.)

I. *Joseph . . a disciple of Jesus . . but secretly for fear of the Jews, went in boldly unto Pilate. Ib. ib.*

One only disciple ventured to shew such love. And this one, who, from fear of others, had concealed his faith. Such was the fruit of the Passion of Christ. No test is better than that we follow Him in peril and shame. *S. Luke xvii. 18.*

II. *And there came also Nicodemus. S. John xix. 39.*

He too, like Joseph, had been a secret disciple, and now, together, openly profess their love. They cared for the body of our Lord; they bore and tended it. And I may minister to His members, His suffering ones, His poor. Do I in love to Him? *S. Matt. xxv. 40.*

III. *And laid it in his own new tomb. S. Matt. xxvii. 60.*

Him we bury in our hearts, when by faith we receive Him. Still more so in the Holy Sacrament. Like Joseph, let it be a "new" (a renewed) resting-place—"in a rock," firm and faithful—guarded by devout thoughts and holy resolutions. *S. John xiv. 23; Deut. xi. 8, 18.*

Text.

Thy word have I hid in mine heart. Ps. cxix.

11. *Buried with Him in Baptism. Col. ii. 12.*

Easter Day.

THE LORD IS RISEN. HALLELUJAH!

Read S. Luke xxvi. 1-9. (Rom. vi.)

I. *He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.* 1 Cor. xv. 4.

“Heaviness may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.” Thirty-three years of sorrow, three days of bitter passion, brought in this glorious morn. So must we seek glory, first dying with Him. 2 Tim. ii. 11.

II. *I laid me down and slept, and rose up again.* Ps. iii. 5.

His body, His spirit, companions in the passion, are again united in triumph. Oh, that I had a spirit to rejoice with Him, as did those of old. To insure this joy, I must abide in Him, and He in me, and be filled with His love. S. John xv. 9-11.

III *As Christ was raised up . . . so we also should walk in newness of life.* Rom. vi. 4.

This is the fruit of His resurrection, that we should have new life in Him. The old man must be destroyed in us; the flesh must be mortified, if I would live that life. Do I live that life? If so, how? If not, why? Rom. viii. 13.

Text.

HE IS RISEN, AS HE SAID. S. Matt. xxviii. 6.

For thoughts on the Gospel of the day, see p. 161.

Easter Monday.

THE FACULTIES OF THE RISEN BODY.

Read 1 Cor. xv. 35-58.

I. *It is sown in corruption ; it is raised in incorruption. Ib. 42.*

The Holy One of God did not see corruption, though he tasted death. We through Him shall be freed from disease, from death, from corruption,—these no longer have any dominion. So spiritually should it be with the soul of the living Christian. *Rom. vi. 6.*

II. *It is sown a natural body ; it is raised a spiritual body. Ib. 44.*

The body of Christ was not impeded by natural difficulties. (*S. John xx. 19.*) Nor should we be hindered by difficulties in the way of holiness, having power to do all things through Him. *Phil. iv. 13.*

III. *It is sown in dishonour ; it is raised in glory : it is sown in weakness ; it is raised in power. Ib. 43.*

The righteous shall shine as the stars of heaven—now weak, then strong, and fitted for the perfect service of God. Even now should we live to the glory of God. Do I? *Tit. iii. 1 ; S. Matt. v. 16.*

Text.

They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. Ps. cxxvi. 5.

For thoughts on the Gospel of the day, see p. 167.

Easter Tuesday.

OF THE MARKS WHICH REMAINED IN OUR LORD'S
RISEN BODY.

Read Rev. v.

I. *What are these wounds in Thine hands?* Zech. xiii. 6.

They are the eternal proof of His suffering to all beings—the way which He has led to glory—for thus it was “needs be.” How dare I then shrink from suffering? May I make another path to glory? S. *Luke* xxiv. 46.

II. *I have graven thee upon the palms of Mine hands . . . I will not forget thee.* Is. xlix. 15, 16.

For the sake of His faithful followers, they are a memorial to Himself, for whom, for what He had suffered. He ever bears us in mind. Make me to remember Thee and forget the creature, O my Lord, otherwise shall I forget Thee. 1 *Tim.* ii. 4-8.

III. *Every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him.* Rev. i. 7.

To the impenitent they are condemnation,—to those who crucified Him then, to those who crucify Him now with sin,—yet a blessed sight to the redeemed. How shall I then look on Him? 1 *John* ii. 28.

Text.

We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God. Acts xiv. 22.

For thoughts on the Gospel of the day, see p. 172, &c.

THE MOTHER OF JÉSUS AFTER THE RESURRECTION.

Read S. John xiv. 18-24.I. *Blessed are all they that wait for Him.* Is. xxx. 18.

It is nowhere recorded in Scripture that she went to seek the Lord. "Blessed is she that believed." Her spirit is known by her own words: "*Be it unto me according as Thou wilt.*" She believed; she waited His time. Let us learn from this. S. *Luke* xxi. 19.

II. *He that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him.* S. John xiv. 21.

It is not said that He manifested Himself to her, as to others. But she knew this blessed promise. She waited to have it accomplished to her as seemed Him best. If I so loved Him, I too might be sure of His blessed presence. *Ib.* 23.

III. *In the multitude of the sorrows that I had in my heart Thy comforts refreshed my soul.* Ps. xciv. 19.

In proportion to the trials she suffered, such, according to God's promises, was her consolation. Such too are the consolations of all His people. In my trials do I seek solace from earth or refreshment from His presence? 2 *Cor.* i. 7.

Text.

I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you. S. John xiv. 18.

THE HOLY WOMEN GO TO THE SEPULCHRE.

Read S. Luke xxiv. 1.

I. *Very early in the morning they came unto the sepulchre, bringing spices.* Ib. 1.

Love carried them forward. Follow them in spirit. They expended their substance, devoted their time, rose very early, went fearless of the guards, for love of their Lord. Dost thou love Him? go and do likewise. 1 *John* iv. 18.

II. *Who shall roll us away the stone?* S. *Mark* xvi. 3.

They thought there would be a difficulty, where there proved to be none. Still, as they thought of it, they remembered their own weakness. Do I bear in mind my own insufficiency, and yet in faith go forward. S. *Luke* ix. 62; xviii. 1, &c.

III. *They saw that the stone was rolled away.* Ib. 4.

It was rolled away (S. *Matt.*) with noise and an earthquake,—so the Divine Providence had prepared the way. He is ever present to those who seek Him, smoothing all difficulties, removing all obstacles. Has He not done so for me? Then let me trust Him. *Ps.* ix. 10; xli. 1.

Text.

We shall reap if we faint not. Gal. vi. 9.

THE ANGEL INFORMS THEM OF THE RESURRECTION
OF CHRIST.

Read S. Matt. xxviii. 2-6.

I. *Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified,* Ib. 5.

This was the reason why they need not fear. God sends consolation according to their need to those who seek Him. If I would have His comforts, I must abandon the love of myself, and of all but Jesus. *P.s. lxix. 32.*

II. *He is not here; He is risen, as He said.* Ib. 6.

They sought Him in the tomb, among the dead. Where do I seek Him? In earthly comforts? In sensual pleasures? In worldly vanities? Does not conscience and the voice of the Spirit say, "He is not here." *1 Kings xix. 9.*

III. *Come, see the place, &c. (Ib. 6.) And they found not the body of the Lord Jesus.* S. Luke xxiv. 3.

They loved Him; but it was the body they wished to tend; so they found Him not. He must be sought with a pure love. Our desires and intentions must not be mingled with self and earthliness. *Are mine? Prov. i. 28, &c.*

Text.

Why seek ye the living among the dead. S. Luke xxiv. 5.

THE WOMEN REPROVED, AND SENT TO TELL THE
DISCIPLES.

Read S. Mark xvi. 5-8.

I. *Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth.* Ib. 6.

They ought to have received the words of the angel with thankfulness and faith. They were seeking Jesus, but not in the right place nor in the right way. The God of the living will not be found in the tomb. *Col. iii. 1.*

II. *He is risen ; He is not here.* Ib.

Here was the proof of His resurrection. Here I may find the test of spiritual life. Am I where I was, in the grave of corruption and sin, in languor, in lifelessness? Or have I passed away from these and risen? *S. Matt. viii. 21, 22 ; Is. xxxviii. 19.*

III. *Go . . . tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead.* *S. Matt. xxviii. 7.*

What! These who forsook Him and fled. God deals to us the measure of His love, not of our deserts. (*Ps. xxv. 7.*) Deal so with me, O Lord. Why, then, these fears! (*Mark xvi. 8.*) Where is faith, hope, love?

Text.

Perfect love casteth out fear. 1 *S. John iv. 18.*

First Sunday after Easter.

THE WOMEN GO AND TELL PETER AND JOHN.

Read S. Luke xxiv. 1-8. (S. John xx.)

I. *Tell His disciples (and Peter; S. Mark). Ib. 7.*

Peter, who had confessed Him, who had denied Him, who had repented and wept. See the tenderness of God, and hope in His compassion. He will not cast me off, though in frailty I have sinned. *Mal. iii. 6, 7.*

II. *Their words seemed to them as idle tales. S. Luke xxiv. 11.*

Christ had foretold it, the women report it, yet the disciples "believed them not." God leads us now by inward calls and outward ordinances. How often have I treated them as idle tales. *Is. vii. 9; liii. 1.*

III. *They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre. S. John xx. 2.*

This was the report of Mary Magdalene. Her sorrow and love carried her away. The angel had said, "He is risen." Even my best affections and zeal must be watched, lest they lead me into error. *Rom. x. 2.*

Text.

Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much. S. Luke vii. 47.

For thoughts on the Gospel of the day, see p. 176.

PETER AND JOHN RUN TO THE SEPULCHRE.

Read S. John xx. 1-10.

I. *Peter went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre. Ib. 3.*

They wish to know of the truth for themselves, not trusting those who believed not. It is not what others do, but what I ought to do, that should guide me. *S. John iv. 41, 42.*

II. *The other disciple did outrun Peter. Ib. 4.*

“Both ran together,” but he whom Jesus loved, he who loved Jesus, he who leaned on His bosom, was the foremost. Divine love does not creep, but fly to its objects. Have I those seraph wings? *1 Cor. ix. 24-26.*

III. *He saw, and believed. Ib. 8.*

He let Peter enter first; he himself waited awhile. Learn hence to be humble, unhurried, and considerate. His reward was the remembrance of his Master’s words: he saw and believed. *S. Luke x. 23.*

Text.

They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint. Is. xl. 31.

CHRIST APPEARS TO PETER.

Read S. Luke xxiv. 12, 33, 34. (1 Cor. xv.)

I. *He (Peter) departed, wondering in himself.* Ib. 12.

Meditating on what he had seen, as it would appear, alone. Such is a disposition of mind apt to see and receive God. The more we retire apart from earthly things, the more likely we are to find Him. *Hos. ii. 14.*

II. *The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon.* Ib. 34.

Not to John who stood by the cross, but to Peter who fled and denied Him, now penitent. So mercifully does He deal with and esteem the penitent soul. Do I so seek Him in penitence? *S. Luke xv. 20, &c.*

III. *He was seen of Cephas.* 1 Cor. xv. 5.

The last time our Lord "looked on Peter," it was in sorrow and shame; now He "is seen of Cephas" in joy and love. What a lesson to me of entire forgiveness of all who have offended! *S. Matt. v. 15.*

Text.

Ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. S. John xvi. 20.

MAGDALENE AT THE SEPULCHRE.

Read S. John xx. 10-14.

I. *Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping.* Ib. 11.

Here was one standing near the tomb, sad, looking for her Lord, weeping. Why? For she loved much. Consider, my soul, dost thou seek Him, long for Him, mourn His loss? S. Luke vii. 47.

II. *And seeth two angels in white sitting.* Ib. 12.

She waited awhile, and before long received help. Persevere in holy watching for God, and He will not long leave thee to thyself. It may now be dark, it will not be so always. Ps. xxxvi. 9.

III. *Why weepest thou? . . . Because they have taken away my Lord (I know not where).* Ib. 13.

Who should not weep for the loss of Christ? Would that I did so more. If Magdalene wept, who was not the cause of her loss, how much more I, who banish Him by sin. Cant. v. 2-6.

Text.

Thou hidest Thy face, they are troubled. Ps. civ. 29.

CHRIST APPEARS TO MAGDALENE UNKNOWN.

Read S. John xx. 14-16.

I. *She saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus.* Ib. 14.

While she sought Him He was at hand. He is ever nigh to them that seek Him. Though we know Him not, it is He. We shall one day see Him as He is. *Ps. cxix. 2; Is. xlv. 15.*

II. *Why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou?* Ib. 15.

He asks, that our hearts may answer Him, and seek Him with greater earnestness. Do I seem deserted of God and desolate, I will seek Him but the more, and surely find Him. *Deut. iv. 29-31.*

III. *Tell me where thou hast laid Him.* Ib.

She spake as one ignorant of what she said. Such was the force of her love and her desires. Notwithstanding both Jews and Romans, if she could but find Him, she would take Him. How far am I from such love! Lord, give me more. *Cant. iii. 2.*

Text.

I love them that love Me; and they that seek Me early shall find Me. Prov. viii. 17.

CHRIST MADE KNOWN TO MAGDALENE.

Read S. John xx. 16-18.

I. *Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turneth herself, and saith unto Him, Rabboni. Ib. 16.*

What tenderness, gentleness, friendship, love, in that one word of Christ's; what reverence, humility, adoration, joy, in that word of hers. So are the master and disciple known; so will God speak to me; so may I to Him. *S. John x. 14.*

II. *Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not. Ib. 17.*

Probably there is a great mystery in this. He was not to be touched because He was not then ascended. How can He now? By faith, in His Sacraments, in His Word; yet learn that He will have our love a reverential love. *Heb. xii. 28.*

III. *Go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father and your Father. Ib.*

She would shew her love lying at His feet, as formerly sitting there. He would have her prove it by willing service and love to others. He would have them prepared for His departure, and look to God as their Father. In all these things I too am taught. *S. John xiv. 12; xvi. 16.*

Text.

My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. S. John x. 27.

CHRIST APPEARS TO THE OTHER WOMEN.

*Read S. Matt. xxviii. 5-11.*I. *Behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. Ib. 9.*

It appears as if Mary Magdalene had rejoined them and told them of the Lord. He, then, whom they now desired to see, is revealed unto them. Blessed are they who so desire. *Ps. cvii. 9.*

II. *They came, and held Him by the feet, and worshipped Him. Ib.*

Think of their reverent affection and joy. That was now permitted which had been before refused. It is my duty to seek the consolation of intercourse with God. It is His to fix the time which He will surely vouchsafe to those who persevere. *S. Luke xviii. 1-8.*

III. *Go tell My brethren that they go into Galilee; there shall they see Me. Ib. 10.*

Yes, even those who deserted Him. These He still calls His brethren. Such charity I ought to imitate. (*S. Matt. xviii. 15.*) In Galilee they were to meet Him, away from the clamour of the city. Where shall I then find Him? *Ps. iv. 4. (COM. PR. BK. VERSION.)*

Text.

Unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation. Heb. ix. 28.

Second Sunday after Easter.

CHRIST MEETS THE TWO DISCIPLES ON THEIR JOURNEY TO EMMAUS.

Read S. Luke xxiv. 13-16. (Deut. vi. 4, &c.)

I. *Two of them went that . . . day to a village. Ib. 13.*

They were sad at the death of Christ, and doubtful of His resurrection. They sought relief in the country instead of abiding for the promised day. We ought not to seek consolation in outward things, but quietly abide His time. *Ps. lx. 11.*

II. *They talked together of all these things . . . and . . . Jesus Himself drew near. Ib. 14, 15.*

The sheep wandered, but the Shepherd of Love was at hand, now to prepare their minds for heavenly joys. They talked of His passion. Such discourse pleased Him; so He joined Himself to them. In such converse, O Lord, draw near to me. *S. Matt. ix. 36.*

III. *But their eyes were holden that they should not know Him. Ib. 16.*

Was this their excess of sorrow? How often He is near in our chastisements, yet we see Him not. This is the time for me to gird up my mind, and see and acknowledge Him. *Job ix. 11, 12.*

Text.

It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord. Lam. iii. 26.

For thoughts on the Gospel of the day, see p. 351.

HE INQUIRES WHAT THEY TALK OF.

Read Ib. 17-24. (Deut. xi. 18, &c.)

I. *What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another? Ib. 17.*

He well knew; yet asked, that they might open their griefs and be healed. (*S. James v. 16.*) He loved to be reminded of His passion, which now daily we may plead to Him. What is my discourse with others? Of earthly or heavenly things?

II. *They said unto Him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth. Ib. 19.*

He had asked, What things? as if forgetful of what He had suffered. How little like those who dwell on their wrongs or troubles. He has done all for us; we but little for Him. *Phil. iii. 13, 14.*

III. *We trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel. Ib. 21.*

Here they shew how weak their faith was, not even seeing redemption in His death! Do I acquiesce in the Divine will where I cannot understand it? This I ought to do, remembering how God works by means when I cannot foresee the end. *Job xxiii. 8-10.*

Text.

They that feared the Lord spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened and heard it. Mal. iii. 16.

CHRIST REPROVES THEIR UNBELIEF.

*Read Ib. 25-28. (2 Cor. iv. 8, &c.)*I. *O fools, and slow of heart to believe. Ib. 25.*

These were severe but friendly words; spoken in charity, received in meekness. So give (1 *Pet.* ii. 20), so receive, blame. But do I deserve this blame? Am I slow to believe, or slow to live a practical faith? *S. Matt.* xviii. 15.

II. *Ought not Christ to have suffered? Ib. 26.*

This was what they would not believe. How slow we all are to believe the necessity of His cross for us, or ours for Him. Am I ready to suffer for Him? or would I share His glory without suffering, who could not without it enter into His own. *2 Tim.* iii. 12.

III. *He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. Ib. 27.*

He first spake soothingly; then reproved; now He instructs. What a lesson of kindness and wisdom. Compare with it thine own methods with others. And for myself, what I teach, that do I practise? *Rom.* ii. 17-23.

Text.

Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief.
S. Mark ix. 24.

HE IS INVITED TO ABIDE WITH THEM.

Read Ib. 28-31.

I. *He made as though He would have gone further.*
Ib. 28.

Not but that He desired to stay, only He would have them ask in love. He knows our wants; He would have us know them, and pray accordingly. Is he absent? Do I seek to bring Him back? He will surely come. *Ps. xci. 15; Ezek. xxxvi. 35-37.*

II. *They constrained Him, saying, Abide with us.*
Ib. 29.

They, who knew Him not! and I, who do know Him, do I constrain and entreat Him? Their desires increased, for night drew on. It may even now be night with me. Is He abiding in me, and I in Him? *S. Luke xii. 20.*

III. *He went in to tarry with them.* Ib.

Oh, what joy and happiness to have Him as their guest, Him in the first and highest seat. Which does He hold in my heart, in my affections, in my practice? *S. John xiv. 22.*

Text.

Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.
Heb. xiii. 2.

CHRIST KNOWN IN BREAKING OF BREAD.

Read Ib. 30-35.

I. *He took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened. Ib. 30, 31.*

“And they knew Him.” That we may know Him too, He has given us the same breaking of bread. We too may have our eyes open to Divine things. Is this its effect on me? If not, why not? *Ps. cxix. 130.*

II. *And He vanished out of their sight. ' Ib.*

Giving them no time for visible, tangible adoration; not prolonging their heavenly joys and consolation. Even these may not be always had on earth. Faith exercises and appropriates them now, and waits patiently for full enjoyment. *Is. liv. 7, 8.*

III. *Did not our heart burn within us? Ib. 32.*

Not in the breaking of bread, but in the way, while He was unknown. Such should be my affections, in the hearing, reading, speaking of Divine things. So He speaks to me; so shall He be known to me also. Is my heart so enkindled? *Jer. xx. 9.*

Text.

The sheep follow Him, for they know His voice. S. John x. 4.

HE APPEARS TO THE ASSEMBLED DISCIPLES.

Compare S. Luke xxiv. 36, &c., with S. John xx. 19, &c.

I. *The same day, at evening . . . came Jesus. Ib.*

Not till evening. They were slow to believe, and He delayed His coming. Now their doors were closed for fear of the enemy. Would I be visited of Him? First, then, believe in Him. Bar the entrance of thy heart against all evil. *Ps. cxxxix. 23, 24.*

II. *And stood in the midst. Ib.*

Equally seen of all. Their Master, Guide, Friend, Shepherd, Protector. Is He in the midst of us? of me? and of all mine? In our hearts. Receive Him there. Where two or three are in His name there is He. *S. Matt. xviii. 20.*

III. *And saith Peace be unto you. Why are ye troubled? It is I Myself. S. Luke.*

He is our peace and our salvation. Through Him we have peace with God, and by Him peace in ourselves, being conformed to the will of God, and for Him peace with all men, by charity, patience, love. *Ps. xxxv. 3; xxvii. 3.*

Text.

The Lord shall give His people the blessing of peace. Ps. xxix. 10. (COM. PR. BK. VERSION.)

CHRIST SHEWS THEM HIS HANDS AND FEET.

Read S. Luke xxiv. 37-40.

I. *They were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit.* Ib.

Yet it was the Lord, but they knew Him not. How often holy thoughts and views of God, or practical truths, are set aside. We fear to encounter them, we treat them as illusions, and so neglect them. *Ps. lxxviii. 58.* (COM. PR. BK. VERSION.)

II. *And he said . . Why are ye troubled?* Ib. 38.

For they who are endued with constancy and repose on God are not troubled with sudden fears. How do they act on me? If thus, have I endeavoured to foresee, and in prayer to provide for, my need? *S. Mark xiii. 33; Eph. vi. 13, 18.*

III. *Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself.* Ib. 39.

Blessed Lord, who shewest Thyself the help, the peace of Thy people, when in fear of difficulty or trial, here is my hope, my stay. In Thy sufferings for me, and in Thy glory, is the pledge of my future joy. *1 Pet. iv. 13.*

Text.

The Prince of life whom God hath raised from the dead. Acts iii. 15.

Third Sunday after Easter.

CHRIST TAKES FOOD WITH THE DISCIPLES.

Read S. Luke xxiv. 41-43.

I. *While they yet believed not for joy . . He said . . Have ye here any meat?* Ib.

Thus in every way He seeks to persuade men to believe on Him. His messengers, His teaching, His miracles, now even the very nature of His body, is exhibited to them. In every way should we persuade others for their good. Do I in any? S. Matt. xxi. 33-37.

II. *And they gave Him . . . And He took it and did eat.* Ib. 42, 43.

Their fare was very simple; they gave Him the best that they had: the broiled fish, emblem of a soul prepared for Him; the honeycomb, emblem of a pure, loving, holy will. Are my offerings such? 2 Cor. viii. 12.

III. *Then were the disciples glad, &c.* S. John xx. 20.

They saw their Lord once more, not reproaching them for their flight, but comforting them with His presence. How often has He so beneficently dealt with me. I will repent and still hope in Him. Rom. viii. 32.

Text.

Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God. S. Luke xiv. 15.

For thoughts on the Gospel of the day, see p. 189.

HE OPENS TO THEM THE SCRIPTURES.

Read S. Luke xxiv. 44-48. (Ps. xix.)

I. *All things must be fulfilled.* Ib.

He reminds them of His passion and death. These were before decreed of God, and He submitted. Have I learnt to desire the fulfilment of His will in me? Do I see His hand in every trial? *Ps. cxxxv. 5, 6.*

II. *Then opened He their understanding.* Ib. 45.

That they might understand the Scriptures, not for their sakes only, but for ours to whom their Gospel has come down. Do I not receive it heartily? It is because of self-will and worldly self-love. These hinder my sight. 2 *Cor. iv. 3, 4.*

III. *Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer.* Ib. 46.

“Thus,” from the necessity of atonement, from love to man, from obedience to the Father, He suffered as it behoved Him; and we too must follow Him, bearing our trials in resignation, in love, in obedience to His will. 1 *Pet. iv. 17-19.*

Text.

Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold the wondrous things out of Thy law. *Ps. cxix. 18.*

HE GIVES TO THEM THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE POWER
OF ABSOLUTION.

Read S. John xx. 21-23.

I. *As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you.*
Ib. 21.

His ambassadors sent forth even as Himself! What a calling! Co-operating with Him for the salvation of men. How does it behove them to labour; how does it behove me to receive them. 1 Cor. iv. 1.

II. *Receive ye the Holy Ghost.* Ib. 22.

As He breathed life into Adam, so now the spirit of life and truth into His Apostles. But upon all according to their vocation is this gift poured. Have I then its inward life? 1 Cor. xii. 13; Job xxxiii. 4.

III. *Whosoever sins ye remit they are remitted unto them.* Ib. 23.

Here is another mercy, fallen man a channel of pardon to his fellow-sinners. Oh, the love of Christ to our souls. Do I esteem this mercy? Do I bend my heart and soul to receive it when ministered? 2 Cor. v. 18.

Text.

He that receiveth you receiveth Me. He that heareth you heareth Me. He that despiseth you despiseth Me. S. Matt. x. 40; S. Luke x. 16.

THE UNBELIEF OF THE APOSTLE THOMAS.

Read S. John xx. 24, 25.

I. *Thomas, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came.* Ib. 24.

He disbelieved the disciples from Emmaus, and departed from their company. Confidence in his own judgment and disunion: both great faults. So he lost this presence of his Lord. Let me beware. *Heb. iii. 18, 19.*

II. *The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord.* Ib. 25.

First, like the rest, he disbelieved the words of two of his brethren; now he disbelieves all: so one fault leads to another. Do I trust myself and my own opinions? See whither it may lead me. *S. Mark xvi. 14.*

III. *He said unto them, Except I shall see . . . I will not believe.* Ib.

Here is the root of the evil: Except I shall see. Faith is not sight. Much must be taken on trust; first trusting God, and in Him those through whom He is pleased to instruct us. *Heb. xi. 1.*

Text.

Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed. S. John xx. 29.

CHRIST APPEARS TO THE DISCIPLES WHEN THOMAS IS
PRESENT.

Read S. John xx. 26-29.

I. *After eight days again His disciples were within, and Thomas with them. Ib. 26.*

Eight days in unbelief! If any rise from such a state, it is of the alone mercy of God. He sought one poor sinner, but in the sight of the others, that he might confess his fault before them, and give them joy. *Eph. ii. 4-8.*

II. *Then came Jesus, the doors being shut. Ib.*

Yet it was with closed doors; the brethren might know his fault, but not the world without. Am I careful of the reputation of others, and tender to them? Do I close the door of my lips, lest I wound a brother? *Gal. vi. 1.*

III. *And stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. Ib.*

There alone is peace where Jesus is in the midst; where He is the centre of all our hopes, our thoughts, our words, our works; there is joy, and there peace. Do I seek it, do I find it in Him? *S. John xvi. 33.*

Text.

He is our peace. Eph. ii. 14.

THE WORDS OF CHRIST AND THOMAS.

*Read S. John xx. 27, &c.*I. *Then saith He to Thomas. Ib.*

He turns to one only, and speaks to him. He was the greater and persevering offender. His, therefore, was the greatest necessity. True sons of God thus in charity deal with those that have trespassed against them. Do I? *S. Matt. v. 44, 45.*

II. *Reach hither thy finger, and behold My hands . . be not faithless, but believing. Ib.*

Thus Christ proved Himself God, and present when Thomas had refused his belief. Had he weighed that presence (*Eccles. v. 2, and see p. 177*), then he would have spoken more circumspectly. Christ in meekness and mercy reproves him, and with the reproof instructs him.

III. *Thomas said . . . My Lord and my God. Ib. 28.*

How few, how full his words of confession! Sorrow and love fill his heart; his Lord whom he fears, his God whom he loves, is now acknowledged. Is he my Lord and my God? How do I prove this my confession? *Mal. i. 6.*

Text.

I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour. Is. xliii. 3.

CHRIST APPEARS AT THE SEA OF TIBERIAS.

Read S. John xxi. 1-5.

I. *Simon Peter saith . . . I go a fishing. They say . . . We also go with thee. Ib. 3.*

What simple union with each other, consideration for each other! In all my dealings with others, how do I act? If leading them, do I seek their good; if following, do I consent cheerfully? *Ps. cxxxiii. 1.*

II. *That night they caught nothing. Ib.*

And well God ordered this fruitlessness, that they might know that in the strength of their Lord only could they prosper. Have I learnt His all-sufficiency, and my own nothingness. *Ps. cxxvii. 1, 2.*

III. *When the morning was come, Jesus stood on the shore. Ib. 4.*

But they knew Him not. We, like they, fish in the waters of this life, but too often for honour, pleasure, &c. What have I gained? Nothing real! To Thee I confess it, O Lord! Except in Thee and by Thee there is no good. *Rom. vi. 21.*

Text.

Without Me ye can do nothing. S. John xv. 5.

Fourth Sunday after Easter.

CHRIST DISCOVERS HIMSELF TO THE DISCIPLES.

Read S. John xxi. 6-9.

I. *Cast the net on the right side of the ship. And now they were not able to draw it. Ib.*

The Lord commanded, and though scarcely known to them, they obeyed, and prospered. By His power He prepared His creatures for them. Do I cultivate an obedient spirit? Do I trust myself or the Lord for success? 1 Cor. iii. 6.

II. *It is the Lord. Ib. 7.*

The disciple whom Jesus loved first knew Him. His was a pure, a loving, a fervent spirit. He saw God, and led his brother to see Him. S. John xiv. 21; 1 S. John i. 3.

III. *When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he cast himself into the sea. Ib.*

Such was his fervour and his fearlessness; let me compare with it my own slothfulness towards my Lord. Let me no longer delay. Peter ventured, and sunk not; nor shall I if I trust in Him. Ps. xxii. 4, 5.

Text.

The hand of the Lord shall be known towards His servants. Is. lxvi. 14.

For thoughts on the Gospel of the day, see pp. 189, 204.

THEY PARTAKE OF THE FOOD HE PREPARED.

Read S. John xxi. 9-14.

I. *As soon as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals . . and fish . . and bread. Ib. 9.*

Even in His risen body He ministered to them as a servant. Shall I decline such offices, who am but dust? All was ready, for it was prepared of Christ. In all that I have I will acknowledge Him. *Ps. civ. 27, 28, &c.*

II. *Bring of the fish which ye have now caught. Ib. 10.*

Fish were already prepared, yet Christ would have them complete their toil, and see His work. In such a spirit should I labour, and give thanks to Him. *Ps. ciii. 1, 2.*

III. *Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine. Ib. 12.*

It was a kind and benevolent invitation then, but it spake of a better one to which I too most unworthily am invited. Have I in heart accepted it; am I in diligence preparing for it? It is His will, He has prepared it for me. *S. Luke xxii. 30; Rev. iii. 20.*

Text.

I am among you as he that serveth. S. Luke xxii. 27.

CHRIST COMMITS HIS SHEEP TO PETER.

*Read S. John xxi. 15-17.*I. *Lovest thou Me more than these?* Ib. 15.

This needful question for the chief of the Apostles. Well might he be sorrowful who thrice had denied Christ. Dost Thou ask me the question, *Lovest thou Me?* How can I answer it: I who have so sinned against Thy love? 1 *S. John* ii. 15.

II. *Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee.* Ib. 16.

He will not now say, "more than these." Enough if he loves his Lord in truth at all. No more "I know," but "Thou knowest." Knowledge of myself will teach me to think worse of myself, better of others. Oh, that I may truly have Him as my witness that I do love Him. *Phil.* ii. 3; *Rom.* viii. 16.

III. *Feed My lambs . . . Feed My sheep.* Ib. 15, 17.

Here, then, is His will—our own test—the evidence to others of our love. Labour for Him. Do I do so in the garden of my own soul, who am one of His sheep? Do I refrain from offending His little ones—His lambs? Do I seek in Him to do good unto all men? *Gal.* vi. 10.

Text.

Thou, O Lord, knowest me; Thou hast seen me, and tried mine heart towards Thee. *Jer.* xii. 3.

CHRIST FORETELLS PETER'S MARTYRDOM, AND
ANSWERS THE QUESTION ABOUT S. JOHN.

Read S. John xxi. 18-25.

I. *Thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee. Ib. 18.*

He who now had learnt to fear his own constancy, is now assured of it, even to death. What may come to me from others I know not; God grant me myself to crucify the flesh, and to receive as from Him trials which come by other hands. *Gen. xvi. 9; xxii.*

II. *Lord, and what shall this man do? Ib. 21.*

Our Lord bid him "Follow Me." He looked round and saw S. John, and asked our Lord of him. If we look off from Jesus and concern ourselves with others, we do not wisely. John was meekly following. Let me follow also. *Heb. xii. 2.*

III. *What is that to thee? follow thou Me. Ib. 22.*

Curiosity in the concerns of others is not according to the mind of God. I have enough to do with myself. Am I tempted to ask what others think, say, or do, remember the words, "What is that to thee?" *1 Pet. iv. 15.*

Text.

Follow thou Me. Ib.

CHRIST APPEARS TO MORE THAN FIVE HUNDRED.

Read S. Matt. xxviii. 16, 17. (1 Cor. xv. 6.)

I. *Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee into a mountain.* Ib.

And at the same place, it is supposed, were gathered the five hundred. Christ had bidden the eleven; they had bidden others. Whatever He has vouchsafed to us, we should enlarge our affections, and extend help to those who need. 1 *Pet.* iv. 10.

II. *Where Jesus had appointed them.* Ib.

There they went, and there, according to His promise, He met them. "Faithful is He that hath called us." Am I faithful to Him? Has not He been more than faithful to me? *Heb.* x. 23.

III. *When they saw Him, they worshipped Him: but some doubted.* Ib.

He has the homage of true believers; yet some even now doubted. Oh, the hardness of man's heart! Oh, the hardness of mine! yet soften it, O Lord, that with Thy faithful ones I may ascend Thy mountain, may believe and adore. S. *Luke* xii. 29; *Ps.* cxxi. 1.

Text.

Exalt the Lord our God, and worship at His holy hill; for the Lord our God is holy. *Ps.* xcix. 9.

THE DISCIPLES SENT FORTH TO ALL NATIONS.

Read S. Matt. xxviii. 18, 19.

I. *All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth.*
Ib.

That, indeed, which was His, who was one with the Father, is again given to Him, the reward of His cross and passion. What have I won in this way? Do I desire victories so gained? Do I acknowledge His? *Rev. v. 12, 13.*

II. *Go ye therefore, and teach all nations.* Ib. 19.

“Therefore;” in His strength, by His authority, His ambassadors and ministers go forth, and all Christians have their call to all within their reach; None are shut out from His mercy—I was not; None, least of all the poor and sorrowing may be from mine. *S. Matt. xxv. 40.*

III. *Baptising them in the name of the FATHER, and of the SON, and of the HOLY GHOST.* Ib.

Baptism instead of circumcision. Here is part of that lighter yoke. Do I give thanks for it? A member of Christ! A child of God! An heir of heaven! In His family; what a gift! what a name! Is my life conformable to it? *Rev. iii. 1-3.*

Text.

Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named. Eph. iii. 15.

THE DISCIPLES FURTHER INSTRUCTED.

Read S. Matt. xxviii. 20 ; S. Mark xvi. 15-18.

I. *Teaching them to observe all things.* Ib.

Not merely to know and talk of His commands, but to keep them. Not some only, but all. His commandments are not grievous. Yet how often have I esteemed them so. *S. James ii. 10 ; 1 S. John v. 3.*

II. *He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved ; but he that believeth not . . . (S. Mark.)*

“Shall be damned.” What an alternative ! And through the grace of God I am permitted and enabled to choose. Let me give thanks for my privileges, feel for those who have them not, and see that my faith be not a lifeless one. *S. James ii. 14, &c.*

III. *These signs shall follow them that believe.* Ib.

And they did attend the first spread of the Gospel. Have I such signs spiritually. Are the works of the devil cast forth ? Do I speak the language of Zion ? Do I endure, but not fall under temptation ? Do I labour for the sick and needy ? *S. Matt. xvii. 20.*

Text.

They all shall have one shepherd ; they shall also walk in My judgments, and observe My statutes and do them. *Ezek. xxxvii. 24.*

Fifth Sunday after Easter.

CHRIST'S PROMISE OF ANSWERS TO THEIR PRAYERS.

Read S. John xiv. 13; xvi. 16-24.

I. *Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it you.* Ib. xvi. 23.

Hitherto they had asked but faintly (*Ib.* xvi. 24), now they were to ask in faith and confidence, through the name of Jesus. Have my prayers been hearty, earnest, confiding? or cold, languid, faithless? S. James i. 5, &c.

II. *If ye shall ask any thing in My name I will do it.* Ib. xiv. 14.

If they did not fully trust the Father whom they had not seen with their bodily eyes, the sympathy of Jesus was their security; He would hear them, He would look to it, He would do it. Blessed Jesus, undertake for me. In Thy name only do I trust. *Heb.* iv. 14-16.

III. *That the Father may be glorified in the Son.* Ib. xiv. 13.

Not only our weakness, our misery, our necessity; not only the sympathy, the compassion, the merits of Jesus, but the glory of God, the Holy, the Just, the True, is our security. Do I rest on this hope? Pour out thine heart, then. Pray without ceasing. *Ps.* lxii. 8.

Text.

Ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. S. John xv. 7.

For thoughts on the Gospel of the day, see p. 287.

ROGATION MONDAY.

THE PROMISE OF THE COMFORTER.

Read S. John xiv. 16-31 ; xvi. 1-15.

I. *It is expedient for you that I go away.* Ib. xvi. 7.

In kindness to them He says not "for Me," but for you. His thought is for His people. Even His withdrawal is for our good, not for His pleasure only. Do I make myself the centre and end of my actions? think of Him, and live for God and His people. *Phil.* i. 23, 24.

II. *If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you.* Ib.

They loved Christ, but it may have been too much bodily, too little spiritual love, and if so, selfishly. Such affections hinder the Spirit and the grace of God. Am I clear of them? *S. John* vi. 26.

III. *If I depart I will send Him unto you.* Ib.

This great gift was made to depend on the departing of Christ from among men. How many spiritual blessings follow on the loss of earthly comforts. Do I feel this truth? approve it? willingly receive it? *2 Cor.* viii. 1.

Text.

3. *Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.* *2 Cor.* iii. 17.

ROGATION TUESDAY.

LO, I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS.

Read S. Matt. xxviii. 20.

I. *Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Ib.*

They had to go forth, sheep among wolves. Here was their comfort and stay. Here, too, should be ours. Jesus with us! Do I make this my consolation, my support? *Jer. i. 8; 17-19; Exod. xxxiii. 14, 15.*

II. *I am with you alway. Ib.*

Both as God, and as God made flesh for us; unseen, yet seeing (*Prov. xv. 3*) and knowing us every way. Here is the incitement to serve Him. With us also in the holy Eucharist, our food, our strength. My soul! cleave to Him.

III. *I am with you alway. Ib.*

By that daily grace which He affords, and so unites us to God; by the power of that grace enabling us to serve Him; by His special providence guiding us to the end. In so many ways art Thou with me, O Lord! I will in heart and soul be ever Thine. *Is. xlvi. 4; li. 11, 12.*

Text.

I am with thee, for I am thy God. Is. xli. 10.

HE LEADS THEM OUT TO THE MOUNT OF OLIVES.

Read S. Luke xxiv. 45-50. (Acts i.)

I. *Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high. Ib. 49.*

Learn, then, the disposition in which to look for grace. Tarrying (*orig.* sitting) quietly—quiet even among the men of the world—waiting until His time—not resting in our own power, but waiting to be clothed with His ere we venture on His work. *Ps. lxxi. 16.*

II. *He led them out as far as to Bethany. Ib. 50.*

Bethany, where Martha had received Him and served Him, and Mary had sat at His feet. It may be to have given them His blessing, or to let them witness His ascension. The Lord forgets not His people. Alas, how do I forget Him? *Heb. vi. 10.*

III. (*To*) *the mount called Olivet. Acts i. 12.*

Think of the mingled joy and sorrow of this holy band; their prayers, their praises, their adoration. His last lesson is, as it were, "Through Gethsemane to heaven," "By Mount Olivet to the throne," "By suffering to glory." Teach me this, O Lord. *S. Luke xxiv. 26; Acts xiv. 22.*

Text.

We wait for Thy loving-kindness, O God, in the midst of Thy temple. (COM. PR. BK. VERSION.) Ps. xlviii. 9.

Ascension Day.

THE ASCENSION OF OUR LORD.

Read S. Luke xxiv. 50-53. (Acts i. 9.)

I. *He lifted up His hands and blessed them. Ib. 50.*

With what words He blessed them we know not. His blessing must be full of grace, and now we receive it in His only name. Bless me also, O Lord my God, an unworthy sinner, and fill me with Thy grace. *Gen. xxvii. 36, 38; S. John xvii. 20.*

II. *While they beheld He was taken up. Acts i. 9.*

They were not merely beholders with the bodily eye, but looked on Him with affection, reverence, joy. To such the visions of His glory are vouchsafed; to such it shall be given in due time to follow Thee. May it be so to me. *Cant. i. 4; S. John xiii. 36.*

III. *He humbled Himself, &c. . . . Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him. Phil. ii. 9.*

And our ascension to heaven will be more in prospect, as we abase ourselves here. He descended first, then ascended. (*Eph. iv. 9.*) The more I learn Him and love Him, the more His ways will be my ways. Have they been such hitherto? Shew me Thy ways, O Lord! *S. Luke xiv. 11; Ps. xxv. 4.*

Text.

I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God. S. John xx. 17.

For thoughts on the Gospel of the day, see p. 187.

FRIDAY AFTER ASCENSION DAY.

ANGELS PREDICT CHRIST'S COMING AGAIN.

Read Acts i. 9-11. (1 Thess. iv. 13-18.)

I. *A cloud received Him out of their sight. Ib.*

The time was to come when He should be hidden from their bodily eyes. So God willed. He often permits a cloud to interpose between us and Divine things. (*S. Matt. xiii. 17.*) Take heed it be no cloud of sin. *Is. lix. 2.*

II. *Why stand ye gazing up into heaven? Ib. 11.*

So spake the Angels, once witnesses of His coming down; now of His going up. Then they directed to His cradle—now they call away from the mount. The Christian life is not in standing idle, in gazing listlessly, but in holy action; lifting up our souls to Him. *Ps. cxxiii. 1; S. Matt. xi. 12.*

III. *This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner. Ib.*

“So” as to majesty—not as to office. He is gone our advocate; He will return our judge. Do I then so in heart and life follow Him, that I shall see Him with joy at His coming again? *1 S. John ii. 28; Rev. xxii. 7.*

Text.

When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory. Col. iii. 4.

SATURDAY AFTER ASCENSION DAY.

OF THE TRIUMPHAL BAND THAT ACCOMPANIED CHRIST INTO HEAVEN.

Read Ps. xcvi.

I. *He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive.*
Eph. iv. 8.

The office of Christ was to deliver the prisoners from the prison-house of sin, of death, of hell. (*Is. xlii. 16; Zech. ix. 11; 1 Pet. iii. 18.*) The spirits of such must have rejoiced in His triumph, now given a heavenly home. Do I seek that home of freedom? Do I lead others there? *Rom. viii. 19-21.*

II. *The chariots of God are twenty thousand.* Ps. lxxviii. 17.

Angels, too, accompanied Him, rejoicing. Oh, that I rejoiced with them in Him, as the conqueror of hell—as the Good Shepherd bringing back His lost sheep—as the loving Father receiving His prodigal son. For I am such. *S. Luke xv. 7, 18, &c.*

III. *God is gone up with a merry noise.* Ps. xlvii. 5.

The voices of the souls He has redeemed sing praises; they sing a new song to the Lamb. The angels sing to Him who only is worthy, and all (make me, O Lord, to join with them) ascribe honour and glory to Him. *Rev. v. 9, 12, 13.*

Text.

The heavens have declared His righteousness; and all the people have seen His glory. Ps. xcvi. 6.

Sunday after Ascension Day.

CHRIST'S TRIUMPHAL ENTRY INTO HEAVEN.

Read Ps. cx. (Heb. i. 8, &c.)

I. *I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do; and now, O Father, glorify Thou Me, &c.* S. John xvii. 4, 5.

What blessed words! what a ground for our love! what a title to the Father's glory! Can I make any such? Can I say, "I have done Thy will, I have finished Thy work," who have done so little for Him? Yet why not? 2 *Tim.* iv. 6-8.

II. *The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit Thou on My right hand.* Ps. cx. 1.

So exalted is our human nature in Christ. He is our brother, our Head. Such is the reward of His condescension. Such are our privileges and hopes. Do I esteem them? *Rom.* viii. 16, 17.

III. *And sat on the right hand of God.* S. Mark xvi. 19.

To govern and to judge. But he enjoins no more than He has both set an example and given grace to do. Yet how little have I followed Him! Do neither love nor fear influence me? He reads the heart. 1 *Cor.* iv. 5.

Text.

Endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. Heb. xii. 2.

For thoughts on the Gospel of the day, see pp. 108, 204.

THE FRUITS OF CHRIST'S ASCENSION.

Read S. John xiv. 1-3. (1 Thess. iv. 14-18.)

I. *Lift up your heads, O ye gates, &c.* Ps. xxiv. 7.

Truly, that Christ the King of Glory might come in first. Yet no less that for us those gates, closed by sin, might again be opened; and they have been. Can they close again to me? Ask the foolish virgins, and delay not. S. Matt. xxv. 10.

II. *I go to prepare a place for you.* S. John xiv. 2.

In all things He goes before His people. In the cross they were to follow Him, and now in glory also. There He is our head; there we His members shall be. How good; how gracious! Is my heart His? Is that the home I long for? 2 Cor. v. 1.

III. *We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.* 1 S. John ii. 1.

Here is another blessed fruit of it. So guilty, so backsliding, so infirm as I am; what a gift to have one who pleads for me His wounds, His merits, His glory! Live not, then, for the world; for it He prays not. S. John xvii. 9.

Text.

I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am. S. John xvii. 24.

OF OUR ASCENSION.

Read Col. iii. 1-11.

- I. *Mortify your members which are upon the earth.*
Ib. 5.

We, too, may ascend with Him even now, by rising above the world, its affections and lusts. If they overcome me, I am of earth—if I tread them down by grace, it is to ascend with Christ. *Ps. xlv. 5.*

- II. *They will go from strength to strength.* Ps.
lxxxiv. 7. (COM. PR. BK. VERSION.)

To ascend in heart and mind, and that continually, is really to advance in faith, and love, and holy obedience. There is no end of this race but heaven. Here there is no perfection, yet I must aim at it. *S. Matt. v. 48.*

- III. *Unto the God of gods appeareth every one of them in Zion.* Ib. (COM. PR. BK. VERSION.)

The nearest approach to perfection here on earth is, to know nothing but Christ, to see nothing but God in all things, and all things in Him. When shall I ascend this heavenly mount, I who love earth and the things of earth too well? Oh, for that blessed day! *Phil. iii. 7, &c.*

Text.

We shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. 1 S. John iii. 2.

THE RETURN OF THE DISCIPLES TO JERUSALEM.

Read S. Luke xxiv. 22. (Ps. cxxii.)

I. *And they worshipped Him, and returned.* Ib.

Following the warning of the angels, they left the place where they would gladly have lingered. We may have to loose the cords of our tent. It is well, then, to adore and obey, following with the eye of faith His footsteps. S. Matt. xvii. 4, &c. (See p. 193.)

II. *(They) returned to Jerusalem with great joy.* Ib.

For they had seen His glory, received His blessing, obtained the promise of a place in His kingdom, gained the hope of their own ascension. In these things His true servants rejoice. Is my joy in them? 1 Pet. i. 8, 9.

III. *And were continually in the Temple.* Ib. 53.

“And these continued with one accord in prayer,” obedient to the bidding of Christ, faithfully waiting for His promise, conscious of their own weakness and of their strength in Him. Do I act as if I needed Him not? S. John xv. 5.

Text.

Ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. S. John xvi. 20.

THE CHOOSING OF S. MATTHIAS.

Read Acts i. 15-26.

I. *It is written . . His bishopric let another take.* Ib. 20.

The purposes of God to His Church do not fail from the sinfulness of men. If one falls away, He raises up another. Am I fulfilling my vocation? Humble though it be, it may be for His glory. If not, beware. 1 Cor. ix. 27; x. 12.

II. *Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two Thou hast chosen.* Ib. 24.

Having appointed two, they prayed, and left the disposal to the Lord. Such is the best mode of choice. Without prayer and resignation, have I ever made a good choice? At least, has it not been better with these? S. James i. 5.

III. *And they gave forth their lots, and the lot fell upon Matthias.* Ib. 26.

Barsabas did not murmur; Matthias did not boast. Each receive the lot as the will of God, and obey. Am I preferred to another? Be as Matthias. Am I set aside? Be as Barsabas. Have I so acted? 1 Sam. ii. 35; iii. 18.

Text.

God is the judge; He putteth down one, and setteth up another. Ps. lxxv. 7.

THE EXPECTATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

*Read Acts i. 12-14. (Ps. cxxiii.)*I. *They went up into an upper room. Ib. 13.*

At the bidding of Christ they waited in Jerusalem, unworldly in the midst of the world. Waiting not for earthly comforts, but for the Spirit of God, the Comforter. How do I live? Unworldly? Undistracted? He will not be found in dissipation either of body or mind. *S. Matt. xii. 19.*

II. *Where abode both Peter, and James, and John, &c. Ib.*

And they waited patiently, not knowing the hour, but watching in a prepared mind; leaving to God the manner and the time, only fully trusting in Him. See; is this my spirit? *S. Luke xii. 37.*

III. *These all continued . . . in prayer. Ib. 14.*

For they remembered their Master's promise, and the power of prayer. Think of the things they prayed for; by the answers they obtained in the gifts of the Spirit. Do I desire, do I pray for, do I receive His spiritual gifts? *S. Luke xi. 13.*

Text.

Therefore [will] the Lord wait that He may be gracious. . . . Blessed are all they that wait for Him. Is. xxx. 18.

THE PREPARATION OF THE APOSTLES FOR RECEIVING
THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Read Acts i. 14, &c. (Ps. cxxxiii.)

I. *These all continued.* Ib.

None separated themselves from that holy fellowship, but all continued together. Those lose the blessings which the body receives who separate themselves from its members. *Heb. x. 25. (Jude 19.)*

II. *With one accord in prayer and supplication.* Ib.

And all of one mind—one heart and one soul—filled with charity and holy love; forestalling this best gift of the Spirit, whom they desired. (*Acts iv. 32.*) How do I live?

III. *With the women, and Mary, the mother of Jesus, and with His brethren.* Ib.

They were united also with those who followed and were beloved of Christ. With these it is our part to be united; in communion with those at rest, in holy fellowship with those that serve Him here on earth. *Ps. xvi. 3.*

Text.

Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving. Col. iv. 2.

Whit-Sunday.

OF THE COMING OF THE HOLY GHOST.

Read Acts ii. 1, 2. (Is. xliv. 3, &c.)

I. *When the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord, in one place. Ib.*

Once the day of fear, and giving of the law ; now the day of unity and love, and of the grace of God. Is the law of love written in my heart ? Write it there, O God, my Lord. *Jer. xxxi. 33.*

II. *There came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind. Ib. 2.*

A "sound" that might awaken all ! "Suddenly," that they might watch ; "from heaven," for it is the gift of God ; "mighty," to overcome, as a wind piercing and pervading all. Have I watched ? Have I heard ? Have I received and admitted this best gift ? *S. James i. 17.*

III. *And it filled all the house where they were sitting. Ib.*

There was the infant Church. Within that fold was the fulness of His grace. There they who sit in quiet, free from distraction, find His grace. Open Thou my heart, O God the Holy Ghost ; in every corner come in and fill it with Thyself. *S. Luke vi. 21.*

Text.

Filled with all the fulness of God. The Church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all. Eph. iii. 19 ; i. 23.

For thoughts on the Gospel of the day, see pp. 108, 189.

Whit-Monday.

OF HIS COMING IN TONGUES OF FIRE.

Read Acts ii. 1-4.

I. *And there appeared unto them cloven tongues.*
Ib. 3.

The Spirit of God was not to be in idle hearts, but in earnest preachers of the Gospel. These tongues were types. Their own tongues to be proofs of their mission. Am I a true disciple? Does my tongue confess the truths my heart acknowledges? *S. Luke vi. 45.*

II. *Like as of fire.* Ib.

Not cold and lifeless, but warm and giving warmth; bright and giving light. Not only Christ's ministers, but each of His people (yes, I also), if I myself burn with Divine love, should excite it in others also. Do I? *S. Luke xii. 48, 49.*

III. *And it sat upon each of them.* Ib.

Sitting, as on His throne, taking possession and government of the hearts of each; sitting, not to be removed. Oh, that He would obtain over me a constant, unceasing dominion. Can He not? Why? Do I wait for and admit His holy inspirations? *Rom. viii. 13.*

Text.

Who maketh His angels spirits; and His ministers a flame of fire. Heb. i. 7.

For thoughts on the Gospel of the day, see p. 240.

Whit-Tuesday.

THE PURPOSE FOR WHICH THE HOLY SPIRIT CAME.

Read S. John xvi. 1-15.

I. *I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter.* S. John xiv. 16.

His office is to console and comfort; but as the Spirit of Truth. Our troubles here are most often in our imaginations; at least they are not the realities of eternity. He shews us these, and our troubles end. *Rom. viii. 18.*

II. *He will guide you into all truth.* Ib. xvi. 13.

He was also to direct their understanding and knowledge, and bring to mind all our Lord had taught, and they should teach. And now He leads us to receive them. Is my heart open and ready for His instruction? 1 *S. John v. 20.*

III. *He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.* Ib. 8.

The Spirit, who is love, reproving! Yes, for it is from love to sinful men, that they may be converted. And all should reprove others in love. Am I convinced of my own sins? Do I seek His righteousness? Have I renounced the Prince of this world? *S. Matt. xviii. 15; S. James v. 20.*

Text.

Teach me to do Thy will, for Thou art my God; [let Thy loving Spirit lead me forth into the land of righteousness.] Ps. cxliii. 10.

For thoughts on the Gospel of the day, see p. 350.

THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT IN THE APOSTLES.

Read 1 Cor. xii. 1-13.

- I. *Ye shall be baptised with the Holy Ghost.* Acts i. 5 (*and see* ii. 38).

Purging from, and remission of, sins; grace; union with God: these are the effects of Baptism in the worthy recipient. This at least must have been their gain. Happy those who have received and retained such gifts. Have I? 1 Pet. iii. 21.

- II. *The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost.* Rom. v. 5.

With the love of God comes the love of man, for His sake; zeal for the conversion of souls; fearlessness of danger and persecution. Have I these marks? Have I an earnest zeal even for my own soul? 1 Cor. x. 31-33.

- III. *(They) began to speak with other tongues.* Acts ii. 4.

This gift was needed for the spread of the Gospel. God vouchsafes graces according to our vocation. The defect is in ourselves, if we use them not, and so fail. Oh, that I so used all Thy gifts, O Lord, as Thou wouldest! S. Matt. xiii. 11; xxv. 14, &c.

Text.

To every one of us is given grace, according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Eph. iv. 7.

THE WORK OF THE APOSTLES THROUGH THE SPIRIT.

Read Eph. iv. 1-16.

I. (*They*) began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. Acts ii. 4.

Teaching and preaching Jesus crucified; before simple and fearful; now full of wisdom and boldness: for they received the Spirit and used His grace. Do I delay to follow His inspirations? Why? They will lead me to the desired end. Eph. v. 8.

II. *And they were all amazed, &c. Others, mocking, said, &c.* Ib. 12, 13.

Men could not help acknowledging the work of God. Yet there were found, as always, mockers. To some the Gospel is life, to others death. The disciple must bear the reproach of his master, and persevere. S. Matt. xi. 19.

III. *But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice.* Ib. 14.

Peter, who had denied, is now the champion. Filled, not with wine, but with the Spirit. He speaks so as to move others (v. 41) and forget himself. Do I take every occasion of exalting my Master's cause? Eph. iv. 29.

Text.

If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you. 1 Pet. iv. 14.

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT IN THE FIRST CHRISTIANS.

Read Acts ii. 42-47.

- I. *They continued stedfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, &c. Ib. 42.*

Three thousand baptised, and here was the fruit of their conversion—purity of doctrine, stedfastness, unity, communion in “breaking of bread,” and prayer. What an example to us! What a humiliation to me! *Rev. ii. 4, 5; Phil. i. 6.*

- II. *All that believed were together, and had all things common. Ib. 44.*

The love of the world and of self shuts out the Spirit of God. Where He is these are cast forth, and none contends for his own, but for his brethren's good. The Lord give me such a disposition. 1 *S. John ii. 15.*

- III. *(They) were of one heart and of one soul. Ib. iv. 32.*

“They,” this “multitude” of believers, free from dispute, discord, doubt; a holy, happy family of brethren in Christ. Do *I* seek unity and peace? give way to others? follow peace and charity? In such is the Spirit of God. *Ps. cxxxiii. 1.*

Text.

One body and one spirit. Eph. iv. 4.

OF THOSE THAT RECEIVE NOT THE SPIRIT.

Read 1 Cor. ii.

I. *My Spirit shall not always strive with man.* Gen. vi. 3.

“For he is flesh,” given up to thoughts and desires of the flesh. The Holy Spirit strives awhile ; but if we will resist, it must be to our ruin. He cannot dwell in a fleshly mind. What is mine ? Is it given up to Him ? *Gal. v. 17 ; Is. lxiii. 10.*

II. *He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within Mine house.* Ps. ci. 7.

Nor will he, who hateth lies, abide with the deceitful—with those who deceive others—who deceive themselves, but who cannot deceive God. Worst of all is evil under the garb of good. Flee this, O my soul. *Ps. v. 5, &c.*

III. *The Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive.* S. John xiv. 17.

The things of heaven are true and eternal ; those of earth are false and temporal. The world offers these last, riches, honours, pleasures ; but the things of the Spirit, which are contrary, it cannot abide. Which do I choose ? *Heb. xi. 24-26.*

Text.

Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God. Quench not the Spirit. Eph. v. 30 ; 1 Thes. v. 19.

Trinity Sunday.

THE MYSTERY OF THE HOLY TRINITY.

Read 1 John v.

I. *The Lord our God is One Lord.* Deut. vi. 4.

Infinite in all perfections. The Beginning, the End of all things. The only God, beside whom there is none other. Him we cannot comprehend, but we may believe, adore, love. How have I set up other gods for myself! Be Thou only my God. *Is. xlv. 22.*

II. *In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.* S. Matt. xxviii. 19.

Here is the mystery. THREE IN ONE. One in essence, yet Three Persons. The Son begotten of the Father. The Holy Ghost proceeding from the Father and the Son. This I cannot comprehend, yet I believe and receive it, O God triune! Make me to know Thee. *S. Matt. iii. 16, 17.*

III. *Holy, holy, holy, Lord God.* Rev. iv. 8.

In all perfections infinitely perfect. Yet they cry "Holy." The angels and man aimed at His greatness and wisdom, and fell. But holiness becometh His house for ever. From this we have fallen. This alone He bids us imitate. In this, oh, how have I failed! *Levit. xi. 44; 1 Pet. i. 15, 16.*

Text.

THESE THREE ARE ONE. 1 John v. 7.

For thoughts on the Gospel of the day, see pp. 239, 240.

THE PERSON OF THE FATHER.

Read S. John v. 17-31.

- I. *Shall I bring to the birth, and not [beget, marg.].*
Is. lxvi. 9.

The Father is the fount and origin of all divine perfections; proceeding from none Himself, but of whom all proceed. Who above all begat the Eternal Son, one with the Father. Give us, O Father Almighty, to be one with Thee and in Thee; to believe and adore. 2 Cor. x. 5.

- II. *The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named.* Eph. iii. 14, 15.

Within the Eternal Godhead is the only-begotten Son; but beyond and beneath, a family innumerable—sons begotten in Christ. Here is enough to make me glory and be ashamed, rejoice and fear. What honour! How abused! 1 John iii. 1.

- III. *In Thine hand is power and might.* 1 Chron. xxix. 12.

Not but that power is equally in all the Godhead; but it is attributed to the Father the fount of all. We are of nothing; whatever we are, we are His. Render, then, thyself to Him, and Him only, O my soul. Hast thou done so? Wilt thou? Ps. c. 3.

Text.

One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. Eph. iv. 6.

THE PERSON OF THE SON.

Read S. John i. 1-18.

- I. *The only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father.* Ib. 18.

The express image of the Father; in nature, in substance, in perfections one. He lives and loves and is blessed with Him; and from Him and the Father proceedeth the Spirit. And I too am made in His image. Oh, how fallen! *Gen. i. 27.*

- II. *The firstborn among many brethren.* Rom. viii. 29.

By the taking of our nature He has made Himself our brother. By the shedding of His blood and the grace of adoption He has made us His brethren. Have I fully entered into and sufficiently esteemed this marvellous grace? *Heb. ii. 11.*

- III. *In wisdom hast Thou made them all.* Ps. civ. 24.

By Him were all things made, and He is the true wisdom of God,—the light and life of the world. Let me, then, seek of Thee, O Lord, true wisdom, contempt of earthly things, desire of heavenly. So may I attain to Thy presence and glory. *Prov. iii. 19, &c.*

Text.

To the Son He saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever. Heb. i. 8.

THE PERSON OF THE HOLY GHOST.

Read S. John xv. 26, 27; xvi. 7-15.

I. *The Comforter, the Spirit of truth.* Ib. 26.

He who proceedeth from the Father and the Son,—sent forth of the Son from the Father,—He is the Spirit of love, the Spirit of truth, the Spirit of God, knitting both in one, Himself one with the Father and the Son. By Him may we also be one with God. 1 Cor. vi. 17.

II. *Ye have received the Spirit of adoption.* Rom. viii. 15.

The children of God, the brethren of Christ,—these are sanctified of the Spirit; these He perfects for glory. Yet how often have I resisted and grieved Him, unworthy of my heavenly calling! 1 Thess. iv. 8.

III. *Let Thy loving Spirit lead me.* Ps. cxliii. 10.

Equally with the Father and the Son is He filled with love, pity, compassion. To Him all thanks are due for my guidance, comfort, peace. Blessed be God! Eph. iv. 30.

Text.

That Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance. Eph. i. 13, 14.

OF THE LOVE OF CHRIST IN THE EUCHARIST.

Read S. Matt. xxvi. 26-30. (S. Mark xiv.)

I. *This is My body . . . This is My blood.* Ib. 26, 28.

“The cup of blessing, which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?” The love which was proved by the Incarnation and Cross is shewn forth anew in this blessed Sacrament. What love! *Ps. viii. 4.*

II. *He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in him.* S. John vi. 56.

So by His love there is a new way of mutual indwelling for God and His people; and by these symbols He is incorporated into us. Oh, what ought I to be! how pure, how unworldly, to receive Him! 1 *Cor. xi. 28, &c.*

III. *My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed.* Ib. 55.

The body is nourished by earthly food. Here Christ has provided for the soul heavenly, spiritual food, that we may live, not an earthly, but a divine life. Which do I seek? *S. John vi. 33. (Levit. xxi.)*

Text.

Thy love is better than wine. Cant. i. 2.

The introduction of the subject of the Holy Eucharist at this place was connected with the ancient Festival of Corpus Christi, formerly observed on this day.

THE EUCHARIST A MEMORIAL OF CHRIST'S PASSION.

*Read 1 Cor. xi. 23-34.*I. *This do in remembrance of Me.* S. Luke xxii. 19.

He who was once a sacrifice for our sins thus left a way in which we might continually have it in memory before ourselves and God. Continually, then, as He is offered up for me, continually should I offer up myself to God in Him. *Gal. v. 24.*

II. *This do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me.* 1 Cor. xi. 25.

Both His broken body and His outpoured blood are had in remembrance. Doubly would He have us shew Him forth,—in every way, in affection, in heart, in holy service. 2 *Pet. iii. 1*; *Ps. cvi. 6, 7, &c.*

III. *As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till He come.* Ib. 26.

And we who partake of Him are as the sepulchre in which His holy body lay. That was a new sepulchre. See, then, that ours be new,—the old man purged out, and a place prepared meet for the Lord. 1 *Cor. v. 7.*

Text.

Have these things always in remembrance.
2 *Pet. i. 15.*

THE DIGNITY OF THE WORTHY RECEIVER OF THE
HOLY COMMUNION.

Read S. John vi. 51-58.

I. *We will come unto Him, and make our abode with Him.* S. John xiv. 23.

This is the promise to all who love Him and keep His word. In that holy sacrament especially He dwells in us. She who bare Him in her womb was filled with grace. What may we not hope from Him in it! But then, dare I entertain foul and evil desires? 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17.

II. *He dwelleth in Me, and I in Him.* Ib. vi. 56.

We are not only a dwelling-place for Him; but in the Sacrament become united, He with us, and we with Him, and through Him with the triune God. What holiness of life should not such an union produce in me! 1 Cor. x. 16, 17, 31.

III. *As I live by the Father, so He that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me.* Ib. 57.

As Christ receives His essence, life, and all perfections from the Father, so we from Him. To think, to will, to work. If this should be its effects to the worthy communicant, what must I be? Lord, work it in me. S. John iv. 25, 26; xvii. 23.

Text.

The temple of God is holy, which temple ye are. 1 Cor. iii. 17.

First Sunday after Trinity.

THE HOLY EUCHARIST A GREAT FEAST.

Read S. Luke xiv. 16-24.

I. *A certain man made a great supper, and bade many.*
Ib. 16.

This is true of the Gospel invitation ; within which this feast is prepared for all faithful disciples. And all is great—the feast, the Lord, the end,—I, only I, am vile. For this should I hunger and thirst. Here verily is true food. *Prov. xxiii. 3 ; S. John vi. 27.*

II. *And they all with one consent began to make excuse.*
Ib. 18.

Those excuses,—the honours of the world, the care of possessions, earthly affections,—how often these keep men from the altar and from heaven ! Do they not keep me from real fitness for either ? The fault is within me. *S. John v. 40.*

III. *Go out . . . and bring in hither the poor and the maimed, the halt and the blind.* Ib. 21.

The worldly and sensual and neglectful are shut out of themselves ; the poor and humble and needy are called in. Am I such ? He desires me for His guest ; and though I be infirm, He will receive and heal me. *Ps. ciii. 3.*

Text.

The Spirit and the Bride say, Come . . . Let him that is athirst come. Rev. xxii. 17.

For thoughts on the Gospel of the day, see p. 373.

OF THE RIGHT DISPOSITION FOR RECEIVING THE
HOLY EUCHARIST.

Read Ps. xv.; 1 Cor. xi. 27, &c.

I. *In them hath He set a tabernacle for the sun.* Ps. xix. 4.

Yes, in us, a dwelling-place for Himself,—the pure, the holy, the glorious. Ask thyself what should that dwelling-place be; and art thou such? Well may I say, “Make me clean.” *S. Matt.* viii. 1, 2.

II. *To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life.* Rev. ii. 7.

Therefore warfare is needful; the spirit against the flesh, the soul against the body. The appetites to be subjected to reason, the reason to God. Above all, self must be overcome and cast out, and God will give Himself instead. 1 Cor. ix. 27.

III. *I will rain bread from heaven for you, and the people shall go out and gather.* Exod. xvi. 4.

This type of the Eucharist was rained down for all; all might have it freely; but each must gather. Each must go forth from his tent; each must labour. God help me to abandon earth, and go forth and labour for heaven. *S. Matt.* v. 45.

Text.

Put thou thy trust in the Lord, and be doing good; dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. Ps. xxxvii. 3.

OTHER NECESSARY DISPOSITIONS.

Read Ps. xlii., lxxxiv.

I. *I will satisfy her poor with bread.* Ps. cxxxii. 15.

It is the poor, poor in spirit, emptied of themselves, leaning upon God, hungering after Him,—these shall be satisfied with His spiritual food. Am I such? S. *Luke* i. 53.

II. *If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink.*
S. *John* vii. 37.

Athirst! really feeling dry and parched up, longing earnestly, longing to drink of the water from the well of everlasting life. Have I such ardent desires? God grant them to me. *Rev.* xxi. 6.

III. *When thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room.* S. *Luke* xiv. 10.

Well may I, for who is He who bids me, and who am I? Of all graces most necessary to one who would receive Him, is humility, deep humility. Do I know what it is to be truly humble? Such will He regard, receive, and fill with good things. S. *Luke* i. 48.

Text.

He giveth food to the hungry. Ps. cxlvi. 7.

THE EFFECTS OF WORTHILY PARTAKING.

Read 1 Cor. x. 16, 17.

- I. *They looked (flowed, marg.) unto Him, and were lightened.* Ps. xxxiv. 5.

Enlightening of the understanding—faith to see God—opening of the spiritual eyes,—such were the effects on the disciples at Emmaus. For He is the true light (*S. John i. 9*). Grant, Lord, that I too may see. *S. Luke xviii. 41.*

- II. *Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things, so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's.* Ps. ciii. 5.

Fresh power and strength to renew what is decayed. When the soul languishes, and its desires are faint, here is a remedy, and here is strength. How I need it, God only knows. *Phil. iv. 13; Ps. xxxiv. 8.*

- III. *Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill-country with haste.* S. Luke i. 39.

This was immediately on the conception of our Lord, whose blessed body and blood are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's supper; with Him dwelling in us we may be girt up to active and difficult service apart from the world, in communion with those that are His. *Ps. xviii. 29; 1 Kings xix. 8.*

Text.

They shall run and not be weary; and they shall walk and not faint. Is. xl. 31.

OTHER EFFECTS OF WORTHILY PARTAKING.

Read S. John vi. 27-57.

I. *Man did eat angels' food.* Ps. lxxviii. 25.

Not that the angels partake as we, though they too live on Him. But men become as angels, freed from earthly, endued with heavenly desires. Is such the effect on my soul? *S. Matt. xviii. 10; 1 Pet. i. 12.*

II. *As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God.* S. John i. 12.

To all that believe, and receive Him as their Saviour. Then surely no less to those who, believing, receive Him anew in His Sacrament. Am I then a son? Is God my Father? Is Christ my brother? O mystery of love! *Rom. viii. 17.*

III *He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in him.* S. John vi. 56.

Once more remember these blessed words. Not sonship only, but actual oneness with God. For this one thing is needful: that all that is of self should die, that God alone may live in me. *Gal. ii. 20.*

Text.

(The) mystery . . . Christ in you, the hope of glory. Col. i. 27.

THE INFINITE PERFECTION OF GOD.

Read Job xxxvi. 22, &c.

I. *Of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things.* Rom. xi. 36.

Whatever can be conceived of perfection, goodness, holiness, beauty,—all is infinitely present in God. And all things which have any good in them are of Him. Thou alone art worthy of love and adoration, O Lord: we are nothing. *Ps. lxxiii. 25.*

II. (*In**) *Him are all things.* Ib.

Not only in their actual existence, but as examples of perfection for His creatures to follow. Man made after His image! What an example for me to follow! Do I compare myself with Him? What a miserable sight! (*Eph. v. 1.*) Yet, in Christ, I am in Him.

III. (*In**) *Him are all things.* Ib.

Not only scattered about among His creatures, but gathered in one in Him, in the unity of the Godhead; one in purpose, in action, in perfection. Are my intentions, is my eye single? What is the result? *S. Matt. vi. 22.*

Text.

Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect. *S. Matt. v. 48.*

* Several translations have "In" for "To."

THE WISDOM AND OMNISCIENCE OF GOD.

Read Job xlii. 1-6.

- I. *All things are naked and open unto the eyes of Him.*
 Heb. iv. 13.

He knows, He sees, He disposes all things. The knowledge of angels may be great, but it is ignorance compared with His ! Do I believe this, and adore Him ? Yes, Lord ; but how unworthily ! *Job xxxiv. 21, &c.*

- II. *Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight.* Ib.

All past, present, future,—what I was, what I am ; what I shall be, while yet I am not ; all seen and foreseen,—my temptations, dangers, trials, falls, recovery, help, every thing. Blessed be God, in this is my warning, my encouragement. *Gen. xvi. 13.*

- III. *Thus will I magnify Myself, and sanctify Myself.* Ezek. xxxviii. 23.

And He who hates vainglory and self-esteem will magnify Himself ; for He only is all-wise. He only can contemplate Himself all-perfect, all-good. Oh, that I also could contemplate Thee till I know and love Thee as I ought. *Jer. li. 14, 19.*

Text.

By Myself have I sworn, saith the Lord.
Gen. xxii. 16.

Second Sunday after Trinity.

THE POWER AND DOMINION OF GOD.

Read 1 Chron. xxix. 10-13.

I. *His power who can understand?* Job xxvi. 14.

For it is infinite—able to create and to destroy, to build up and cast down. Confide, then, in this with godly fear. It is even ours, if we, lowly in ourselves, live in Him through whom we can do all things. *Ps.* lx. 11, 12.

II. *All that is in the heaven and in the earth is Thine.* 1 Chron. xxix. 11.

Supreme, absolute, universal Owner of all things. Indeed, all things are of Him, made out of nothing, except it be Himself. Whatever befalls me, either for seeming good or evil, let me acknowledge Him. 1 *Sam.* iii. 18.

III. *He is Lord of all.* Acts x. 36.

Not only by ownership, but by government. He made—He now preserves. He called into being—He now directs. What power I have is for His use and for His glory. Do I so use it, and conform to His will? 1 *Chron.* xxix. 14, 16.

Text.

To the only wise God our Saviour be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen. Jude 25.

For thoughts on the Gospel of the day, see p. 216.

THE HOLINESS AND UNCHANGEABLENESS OF GOD.

Read Ps. xcix.

I. *The Lord our God is holy. Ib. 9.*

Think what the holiness of God is,—freedom from every spot or stain—the fulness of love, and joy, and peace. Oh, that I could imitate His purity, loathe evil as He does, and be made meet to sing “Holy, holy, holy!” *Rev. iv. 8.*

II. *Righteous in all His ways, and holy in all His works. Ps. cxlv. 17.*

So not only is God all holy within Himself, but outwardly in all His works. Observe them in themselves, how good! observe them in their objects, how admirable! Oh, that my works were as Thine, without blemish, O Lord! *Eph. v. 26, 27; 2 Pet. iii. 14.*

III. *I am the Lord, I change not. Mal. iii. 6.*

Notwithstanding His infinite power, His ceaseless actings, His perfect freedom, God changeth not. In creation, in destruction, ever the same; tempted and provoked, yet undisturbed. What ought I, His servant, to be? *Ps. cvi. 8, 13, 44, 45, &c.*

Text.

As He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation. 1 Pet. i. 15.

THE LOVE OF GOD BOTH TOWARDS HIMSELF AND US.

Read 1 John iv. 7-21.

I. *God is love.* Ib. 16.

And being in Himself all good, He loves Himself, the Spirit of God being love; delights in His own works, and directs them to His own glory. So should His creatures do, not to their own but to His glory. Yet how often do I the contrary! S. *John* v. 41-44; viii. 54.

II. *The Father Himself loveth you.* S. *John* xvi. 27.

For the same reason, He hateth nothing that He hath made, desiring to conform all to His own image. We, though sinners, are loved of Him—laden with His benefits and grace. Do I use these for Him? 1 *Thess.* ii. 11, 12.

III. *He hath done whatsoever pleaseth Him.* Ps. cxv. 3.

And yet this is not from any necessity or obligation, but because it pleaseth Him. It is pleasure ever to give forth from Himself streams of love. Thee will I praise, O God; to Thee will I give thanks! Ps. cxv. 1.

Text.

His banner over me was love. Cant. ii. 4.

THE GOODNESS, COMPASSION, AND JUSTICE OF GOD.

Read Isaiah lxiii.

I. *The Lord is good to all.* Ps. cxlv. 9.

He has given us laws, yet according to our strength; grace according to our need. He is not extreme or severe; He calls back the wandering, leads the blind, helps the weak. Blessed be God! *Is. xl. 11.*

II. *His tender mercies are over all His works.* Ib.

Although He is all perfect in all ways, the compassion of God stands out shining beyond all His attributes. Seeing our misery, He supplies our wants, prevents, assists, rescues, warns, consoles. What do I not owe to Him? *Lam. iii. 32, 33.*

III. *Thou tookest vengeance of their inventions.* Ps. xcix. 8.

For all He is so good, yet He loathes evil, and in His justice takes vengeance on the sins of men. Disease, famine, pestilence, death—these are the messengers of His wrath. If I suffer, let me abase myself; I deserve all, and more; yet Christ has borne all for me. *1 Cor. xi. 30-32; S. Luke xxiii. 41.*

Text.

Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other. Ps. lxxxv. 10.

THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD.

Read Ps. xxiii. (S. Matt. vi. 25, &c.)

I. *The Lord is my Shepherd ; I shall not want.* Ib. 1.

This is true of all of God's creatures ; He cares for each as if there were none other. He creates all things, and by these, under His providence, all His purpose is effected. To Him most safely may I commit myself. *Phil.* iv. 6.

II. *Ye thought evil against me, but God meant it unto good.* Gen. i. 20.

Every trouble, trial, affliction, yea, even our worst enemies, come upon us through His providence. What comes upon me through others, I may always receive as from Him, and for my good. Do I accept them cheerfully ? *Ps.* xxxi. 15 ; *Rom.* viii. 28.

III. *It is Thou, Lord, only that makest me dwell in safety.* Ps. iv. 8.

And therefore, whether by day or by night, in health or sickness, I may "lay me down in peace, and take my rest." Is this my spirit—calm repose in Him ? 1 *Pet.* v. 7.

Text.

He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust. S. Matt. v. 45.

THE OMNIPRESENCE OF GOD.

Read Ps. cxxxix.

- I. *Can any hide himself in secret places, that I shall not see him?* Jer. xxiii. 24.

Where is the place in which God is not? Where might we be hid from His all-seeing eye? But He is every where, and we altogether open to, and seen of Him. Do I live with this thought always before me? *Heb. iv. 13.*

- II. *Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord.* Ib.

He is not only every where, but filling all things, by His very existence, by His presence, by His power. There is ample matter for reverence, for fear, for consolation, for encouragement. *Ps. xxiii. 4.*

- III. *Not far from every one of us.* Acts xvii. 27.

And not only around and about us, but within us also. There, except I drive Him forth, dwells the triune God. By His goodness I exist; by His wisdom I understand; by His power I act. Oh, let me seek Him, let me keep Him there! *S. John xiv. 17.*

Text.

He filleth all in all. A very present help in trouble. Eph. i. 23; Ps. xlv. 1.

JESUS BAPTISED BY JOHN.

Read S. Matt. iii. (S. Mark i., S. Luke iii.)

I. *Then cometh Jesus, &c., unto John, to be baptised of Him. Ib. 13.*

He first took on Him the nature of sinful man; now the form of a penitent, willing to be accounted vile. But John knew and confessed Him as God, abasing himself—the sure fruit of the knowledge of God. 1 *Pet.* v. 5.

II. *Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Ib. 15.*

Yet John must follow his vocation. Christ leads the way to humble obedience; His servant must follow. In humility and obedience is the path to all true holiness. Is this my path? *Heb.* x. 7.

III. *Lo, the heavens were opened; and He saw the Spirit of God descending, &c.; and lo, a voice, &c., "This is My beloved Son." Ib. 16, 17.*

Open to the lowly are the gates of heaven. On these, the gentle and meek, rests the Spirit, as a dove. These are the children of God, heirs and joint-heirs with Christ. Would I have the spirit of adoption? Yea, Lord.—Then learn of Me. *Ps.* cxxxviii. 6.

Text.

Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of the Lord. Eph. v. 21.

Third Sunday after Trinity.

CHRIST LED INTO THE DESERT TO BE TEMPTED.

Read S. Matt. iv. 1. (S. Mark i.)

I. *Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness. Ib. 1.*

Even by the Spirit of God. When temptations arise, where is safety? Among men in public resorts? No; but in silence, in secrecy, where God only is. *S. Mark vi. 30-32.*

II. *And He was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan. S. Mark i. 13.*

To be tempted (*S. Matt.*). For all that happens to the people of God comes from Him, is permitted of Him. Jesus was an hungered. So Satan watches for my hours of weakness. In such hours I need but watch the more. *1 Pet. v. 8.*

III. *If Thou art the Son of God. Ib. 3.*

By presumption of God's favour, by undue confidence, by an appeal to our adoption in God, by seemingly good ways, he would overthrow me. How did Christ answer? "It is written." My strength must be in the knowledge of His word, and in a willing obedience to it, through the power of Christ. *Eph. vi. 17.*

Text.

Take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day. Eph. vi. 17.

For thoughts on the Gospel of the day, see p. 368.

HIS THREE TEMPTATIONS AND VICTORY.

Read S. Matt. iv. 1-11.

I. *Command that these stones be made bread.* Ib. 3.

The tempter would have Christ minister to his bodily appetites in an irregular way, not trusting to God. He put aside the temptation, not parleying with it, satisfied to do without what God had not supplied. "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God." *Deut. viii. 3; Heb. ii. 18; iv. 15.*

II. *Cast Thyself down, for it is written, &c.* Ib. .

Now he misuses the word of God, hoping to lead Christ to presumptuous ostentation by the semblance of glorifying God. All is not holy which appears so. I must try its objects, intentions, circumstances, for "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." *Deut. vi. 16.*

III. *All these things will I give Thee, if, &c.* Ib. 9.

If what? If thou wilt disobey, dishonour, deny God. Such is the condition of all Satan's promises. And what will he not give for the ruin of a soul? To such temptations the answer must be resolute, "Get thee hence." "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." *Deut. vi. 13.*

Text.

Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.
S. James iv. 7.

S. JOHN BAPTIST'S FIRST TESTIMONY TO CHRIST.

Read S. John i. 19-28. (S. Mark i., S. Luke iii.)

I. *Who art thou? . . . I am not the Christ.* Ib. 19, 20.

His holy life made them think him some great one. Yet he had lived humbly. True praise follows not those who seek the praises of men, but who abase themselves, acknowledge their nothingness, glorify God. Do I so live? 1 *Tim.* i. 15; *Job* xli. 4.

II. *What then? Art thou Elias?* . . . *I am not.* Ib. 21.

No; nor "that Prophet." Yet the character of Elias and of a prophet were truly his (*S. Luke* vii. 24). But as he could answer truly, and still abase himself, he did. Do I make such a choice when I can? and if I do, do I feel it in my soul, or is it in word only?

III. *He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose.* Ib. 27.

Here S. John delighted to speak. To lower himself was to exalt Christ. Honour was given to his Lord by disclaiming it for himself. Do I love to give praise to others, or am I ambitious of it for myself? *Rom.* xii. 10.

Text.

Render honour to whom honour (is due). Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us. *Rom.* xiii. 7; *Ps.* cxv. 1.

ANOTHER TESTIMONY TO CHRIST.

Read S. John i. 29-34.

I. *The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith. Ib. 29.*

John was both a prophet and an apostle. Like all the prophets, he spake of Jesus. Like a true apostle, he lost no opportunity of practising Him. Do I lose no occasion of bearing witness for my Master? *Acts x. 43.*

II. *Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. Ib.*

This is the real end of the Gospel. Remission of sins. Christ the atonement, the true sacrifice, the Lamb. Do I think of Him, meek and lowly, bound for me? Do I look on Him with hope, and gratitude, and love? Do I speak of Him to others? *Jer. ix. 23, 4.*

III. *I saw, and bare record, that this is the Son of God. Ib. 34.*

He added that he knew Him not, that is, at first. But he saw Him, and believed on Him, Now he bears record of Him. Have I found Him my Saviour and my God? Do I glorify Him? How do I deal with His children, and those over me; see their virtues, not their failings? Do I acknowledge them, and abase myself? *1 Thess. v. 12, 13.*

Text.

Behold the Lamb of God. S. John i. 29.

THE THIRD TESTIMONY OF JOHN, AND THE EFFECT
ON HIS DISCIPLES.

Read S. John i. 35-39.

I. *The next day, John looking upon Jesus, saith, Behold the Lamb of God. Ib. 35, 36.*

Again John seized an opportunity of witnessing to Jesus. "Two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus." God gives opportunities; it is our duty to use them. He touches the heart; it is ours to give ourselves to Him, and be thankful. Who made me to differ? *S. John vi. 44.*

II. *What seek ye? Where dwellest Thou? Come and see. Ib. 38, 39.*

What are we really seeking? Happy indeed if I can answer, "Jesus." If in truth and earnest we desire to abide there where He dwells, surely He will give us now to see Him by faith; hereafter "come, ye blessed," to see Him in His glory. But is this my one desire? *Ps. xxvii. 8.*

III. *They came and saw where He dwelt, and abode with Him that day. Ib. 39.*

How sincerely they desired to see Him is plain. They followed, and saw, and abode with Him. Let me try and imagine how they spent that holy day. As for me, am I not wearied with one short hour? *S. Matt. xxvi. 40.*

Text.

Let him that heareth say, Come! and let him that is athirst come. Rev. xxii. 17.

PETER BROUGHT TO CHRIST. PHILIP CALLED.

Read S. John i. 40-44.

I. (*Andrew*) saith unto him, *We have found the Messias.* Ib. 41.

Here is the fruit of the knowledge of Christ. Joy in ourselves; zeal for the souls of others. Blessed indeed if I have found Him myself. Blessed if I speak of Him to others, in whom I have all. *Acts iv. 13; Dan. xii. 3.*

II. *And he brought him to Jesus . . . Thou shalt be called Cephas.* Ib. 42.

Not content with speaking only, He persuaded and brought him. How willingly Peter went with him! And Jesus looked on him, and touched his heart. Oh, that look, may it rest on me! But remember the word Cephas—a stone, solid, firm, constant. *S. Mark x. 21; S. Luke xxii. 61.*

III. *Jesus . . . findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow Me.* Ib. 43.

He went towards Galilee, the rudest, most ignoble part of Judea. Amongst the humble Christ seeks His disciples. And what is their vocation? "Follow Me!" Such also is mine. Do I walk in it, and glory in it? *S. James iv. 6.*

Text.

We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard. *Acts iv. 20.*

NATHANAEL LED TO CHRIST BY PHILIP.

Read S. John i. 45-51.

I. *Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found Him, &c. Ib. 45.*

He loves God most truly who labours that others should love Him also. Nathanael for awhile doubted. Why? Because of the poverty of Nazareth. Do others see no loveliness in Jesus? Bid them "come and see." *S. John iv. 28, 29.*

II. *Behold an Israelite indeed, &c. Ib. 47.*

Yet Christ might justly be offended by Nathanael's doubts. But He loved his sincerity. Would we follow the example of Christ? Put a good meaning on the words of others. How do I act? Is not this for my own peace? *1 Cor. xiii. 5.*

III. *Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God: Thou art the King of Israel. Ib. 49.*

A blessed confession. Rabbi, master. The Son of God, brother of the brethren, the King of Israel, and Lord of all. Do I walk carefully as in His sight, who saw Nathanael under the fig-tree; who seeth me? (*Prov. xv. 11.*) Blessed fruits of a brother's zeal!

Text.

They that turn many to righteousness (shall shine) as the stars for ever and ever. Dan. xii. 3.

Fourth Sunday after Trinity.

THE MARRIAGE IN CANA OF GALILEE.

Read S. John ii. 1-11.

I. *The Mother of Jesus was there: And both Jesus was called, and His disciples.* Ib. 1, 2.

“They have no wine.” Who? Jesus, His mother, His disciples. At least, then, learn contentedness, simplicity, sobriety. Love to be there where He and His saints are with thee. Am I impatient and anxious? Remember His words, “Mine hour is not yet come.” Times are His, not ours. *Ps. xxxi. 15; Acts i. 7.*

II. *Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it.* Ib. 5.

Such is an example of submission under a seeming rebuke; a spirit of obedience, and faithful confiding in His intended kindness. My works can contribute nothing. Yet is my desire and duty, O Lord, to know and to do Thy will. *S. Matt. vii. 24-27.*

III. *Fill the waterpots with water.* Ib. 7.

He had a bounteous gift in store, but He would have them labour first. His ways are not as ours. We seek temporal enjoyments now, false and fleeting. He stores up for those who love Him future eternal bliss, and I have to choose. *Eccles. xii. 3, &c.; Is. lxiv. 9.*

Text.

He (fillet) the hungry with good things. S. Luke i. 53.

For thoughts on the Gospel of the day, see p. 286.

THE BUYERS AND SELLERS CAST FORTH FROM THE
TEMPLE.

Read S. John ii. 13-25.

I. *He found in the temple those that sold oxen, and sheep, and doves. Ib. 14.*

Under the pretence of serving Him they served themselves. His house is the house of prayer. Do we carry our worldly business there? We are as they. Moreover, we ourselves are His temple. (1 Cor. iii. 17.) Is that temple filled with His presence, or with earthly cares and sensual desires?

II. *He drove them all out of the temple. Ib. 15.*

Here at the beginning of His ministry, and again at the close. (S. Matt. xxi.; S. Mark xi.; S. Luke xix.) He cleansed the house of God of these evils. And now by trials and reproofs He chastises His people. Have I so received and acknowledged Him? 1 Pet. v. 6.

III. *Make not My Father's house an house of merchandise. Ib. 16.*

"Take these things hence." Such also is our Lord's warning to every one of us. Take hence evil passions, vanities, lusts, affections, all that can offend Him and defile ourselves. Have I attended to His voice? Beware. 1 Sam. ii. 30, &c.

Text.

He that being often reprov'd, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy. Prov. xxix. 1.

THE CONVERSATION OF CHRIST WITH NICODEMUS.

Read S. John iii. 1-15.

I. *A ruler of the Jews: the same came to Jesus by night. Ib. 1, 2.*

He came acknowledging the zeal, the power, and the authority of Christ. He came secretly, and in fear. This was excusable in one who did not fully know Christ, who was as yet learning Him. Would it be excusable in me, His avowed disciple? 2 *Kings* v. 18, 19; 1 *Sam.* ii. 30.

II. *We know that Thou art a teacher come from God. Ib.*

This much Christ's works proved Him to be. Do not I accept Him as my teacher? Does His teaching advance and profit me? or is it choked by earthly thoughts and desires? *S. Mark* iv. 18, 19.

III. *Verily, verily, I say unto thee. Ib. 3.*

What does our Lord teach? The new birth, baptism of water and the Spirit, and a teachable mind. His own incarnation; "He gave His only-begotten Son." His passion: "So must the Son of man be lifted up." Here are the motives of our love and our discipleship. Thus moved, Nicodemus acknowledged Christ. Help me, O Lord, to do so likewise. *Ps.* lxxxiv. 7; *S. John* xix. 39.

Text.

Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall in no wise enter therein. S. Luke xviii. 17.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY TAUGHT TO HIM.

Read S. John iii. 16-21.

I. *God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son.* Ib. 16.

Here Christ teaches him the Person of the Father, and His love to us. Him should we adore; Him acknowledge; to Him give thanks; to Him offer all we have. Unworthy though I am, He is my Father. *Is. lxiii. 16.*

II. *Light is come into the world.* Ib. 19.

Here He teaches the Person of the Son, Himself, the true Light. The Sun of righteousness; whom only ought I to love, my Saviour. Yet who loves the Light? Who walks in it? Does the world? Do I? *S. John i. 9, 11.*

III. *That which is born of the Spirit is spirit.* Ib. 6.

Here He teaches the Person of the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of God, the Sanctifier. He speaks by the Word, by inspiration. How few know whence He comes or whither He goes. Teach me, O Lord, to know Thee, Thy beginnings, Thy ends in me. *Ps. cxliii. 10, 11.*

Text.

Ye are the children of light; walk as children of light. 1 Thess. v. 5; Eph. v. 8.

S. JOHN BAPTIST'S FOURTH TESTIMONY.

*Read S. John iii. 22-26.*I. *Behold . . all men come to Him.* Ib. 26.

Even the self-denying disciples of John were open to unholy tempers. Envious of Christ, and preferring John to Him. It is unsafe to love any thing, except in and for God. They were led to speak untruly. Am I betrayed into such faults? 1 Cor. xiii. 4.

II. *The friend of the Bridegroom . . rejoiceth greatly, because of the Bridegroom's voice.* Ib. 29.

He knew in whom he believed, and loved his Lord. Neither jealousy nor envy moved him. It is not easy to rejoice in the exaltation of another; but it is the part of a Christian to do so; and grace may effect it in me. (*Prov. xvii. 17.*) Is my love, even of Jesus, such?

III. *He must increase, but I must decrease.* Ib. 30.

All was summed up in this. And in this are the two great principles on which I ought to act. Glorify God—abase thyself. Have I learnt this? Then should I strive to act so, even by my fellow-creatures. How much more by Him, in whom only is life. *Phil. ii. 3, 9.*

Text.

Or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. 1 Cor. xii. 26.

S. JOHN BAPTIST IMPRISONED.

Read S. Mark vi. 14-20. (S. Matt. xiv.)

I. *Herod himself had sent forth and laid hold upon John, and bound him in prison. Ib. 17.*

John, who just bore witness to Christ, now has to suffer for faithfulness. Is he angry, murmuring, discontented? This is not the temper of those who follow Christ. Have I to suffer also? God's choicest servants have suffered before. 2 Cor. iv. 8, 9.

II. *For John had said unto Herod: It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife. Ib. 18.*

Here is the cause. Herod had obeyed his own lusts. John had, in zeal for the honour of God, reproved the evil doer. Happy for me if my worst trials were my reward for serving Thee, O God. Ezek. ii. 5-8.

III. *Herod feared John. Ib. 20.*

For he was a just man, and holy. Herod knew this, heard him often, heard him gladly, was persuaded to many things, but could not conquer his lusts; and was tempted to please the partner of his guilt rather than serve God. What a lesson! I, too, must choose. Acts iv. 19.

Text.

We ought to obey God rather than men.
Acts v. 29.

CHRIST AND THE WOMAN OF SAMARIA.

Read S. John iv. 1-14.

I. *Jesus, being wearied with His journey, sat thus on the well. Ib. 6.*

Jesus wearied! Think of this when in toil, and be content. But in His fatigue He thought of one poor soul, and she was a sinner. He waited for her. How long has He not waited for me! *Is. xxx. 18.*

II. *There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water. Ib. 7.*

Happy those who are found in the discharge of their daily duties when the hour of grace is at hand. Carelessness in these is a bad preparation. Industry and diligence have their reward. Have I reaped it? *Prov. xiii. 4.*

III. *Jesus saith unto her, Give Me to drink. Then saith the woman, &c. How is it? &c. Ib. 7, 9.*

How little He asks! a cup of cold water. How almost rudely she met His request! Type of all who hear His voice, asking for their service, and yet render it not. Yet all He asks is for my good. He asks little; He gives much. *S. Matt. xxiii. 37; xxv. 21.*

Text.

I am sought of them that asked not for Me. I am found of them that sought Me not. Is. lxxv. 1.

Fifth Sunday after Trinity.

CONVERTED, SHE BRINGS OTHERS TO CHRIST.

Read S. John iv. 10-34.

I. *If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is, . . . thou wouldest have asked of Him. Ib. 10.*

But she knew not, nor can any till they are taught of God. In His presence alone, and in the knowledge of Him, is peace. In Christ alone are the well-springs of living waters. Do I seek them? Do I find them there? *Ps. xvi. 11.*

II. *Give me this water, that I thirst not. Ib. 15.*

Here is the effect of converse with Christ. He shewed her the sins of her life; she acknowledged Him, left her earthly cares, sought living waters for herself, sought to bring others to Him (*ib. 28*). Is my joy in Him, and my zeal for Him, such as hers? *Rev. xxii. 17.*

III. *My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work. Ib. 34.*

His disciples thought that He needed food. Here was His food, the saving of a soul, His Father's will. Am I, too, as food to thee, O Lord? Oh, that the doing Thy will also were mine! *Job xxiii. 12.*

Text.

The Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters. Rev. vii. 17.

For thoughts on the Gospel of the day, see p. 246.

CHRIST HEALS THE NOBLEMAN'S SON.

Read S. John ix. 46-54.

I. *When he (whose son was sick, ib. 46) heard that Jesus was come, &c., he went unto Him. Ib. 47.*

We run readily enough to Christ when sorrow is upon us. Therefore God sends it, and we should readily bear it. If we go to Him in bodily ailments, how much more in those of the soul! Do not delay when temptation begins, lest sin and death follow. *Hos. v. 15.*

II. *Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe. Ib. 48.*

For he had asked Christ to come to the place, which was needless, and shewed want of perfect faith. Yet when blamed, he persevered in prayer, received Christ's promise, and believed. "Thy son liveth." Lord, say to me, "Son, thy soul shall live." *Ps. xxxv. 3.*

III. *Himself believed and his whole house. Ib. 53.*

They met him and told of his son's health, and he believed. He told of Jesus's word, and they believed also. Such as my inner man, my soul, and heart is, such will my outer man by grace become. If the one is with Christ, the other will be gained for Him. *1 Sam. xii. 24.*

Text.

Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden. S. Matt. xi. 28.

PETER FISHING AT THE LAKE OF GENNESARET.

Read S. Luke v. 1-11.

- I. *The people pressed upon Him to hear the word of God.* Ib. 1.

Would that we were so affected now-a-days! Christ entered into Simon's ship. Happy to receive his Lord! But he had to thrust out from the land, before Christ sat down to teach. So need I go forth from the world ere He rests within me. 1 John ii. 15.

- II. *He said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets.* Ib. 4.

Christ would lead him to further obedience. They who had toiled all night (as we in this weary world), and taken nothing (what have I gained in it?), might well trust themselves to labour for Him who is sure to recompense. Eccles. ii. 22, 23.

- III. *They inclosed a great multitude of fishes.* Ib. 6.

And they received the reward of their faith and obedience. Who ever wrought in the name of the Lord, and obeying Him, and failed? Trust all to Him who cares for thee, my soul. Ps. xxxvii. 25.

Text.

Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you. S. Matt. vi. 33.

THE CALL OF PETER AND ANDREW, JAMES AND
JOHN.

Read S. Matt. iv. 18-23. (S. Mark i.)

I. *Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.*
Ib. 19.

He called brothers—types of Christian brotherhood and love—simple poor men—figures of Christian humility—from toiling after uncertain possessions on earth, to walk after Him, and keep Him before their eyes, and win souls for Him. In all an ensample for us. S. John xii. 26.

II. *They straightway left their nets and followed Him.*
Ib. 20.

The nets of this world to me are, too much intercourse with the world, needless entangling with its employments, evil affections within. Oh, that I had a ready will to leave these, and follow Jesus! S. Mark x. 28.

III. *And He saw other two . . and He called them . . and (they) followed Him.* Ib. 21, 22.

These also were earning their livelihood, yet they left all. Even a still brighter pattern than the former. To these no promise of a calling was given. These had to leave not nets only, but a father. Yet they trusted Christ, and obeyed. Have I the least portion of such a spirit? Heb. xi. 8.

Text.

Whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation: Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever. Heb. xiii. 7, 8.

THE POSSESSED OF THE DEVIL HEALED OF AN
UNCLEAN SPIRIT.

Read S. Mark i. 23-28. (S. Luke iv.)

I. *There was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit.* Ib. 23.

What a misery! Yet they who are so possessed in soul care little about it. "Let us alone;" "What have we to do with thee?" These are sure signs of the evil one, hatred of the presence of God, and continuance in sin. Do I love, and seek, and preserve that presence? S. Matt. viii. 29-34.

II. *I know Thee who Thou art—the Holy One of God.* Ib. 24.

Why say so? Was it to appease or to tempt our Lord? Such confessions, such praise, pleased not the Holy One, and He bid the evil spirit hold his peace, and come out. Is my praise, are my prayers, meet for His acceptance? Ps. l. 16; cxix. 171.

III. *And when the unclean spirit had torn him . . . he came out of him.* Ib. 26.

With one word of Jesus' he went forth; in mercy He did not leave them alone. Is it not our own fault if unclean, unholy thoughts are not cast forth? Jesus is ready. Am not I? I may be rent in the struggle; but I will trust in God, and He will overcome for me. 1 S. Pet. iv. 12, 13.

Text.

He cast out the spirits with His word. S. Matt. viii. 16.

SIMON'S WIFE'S MOTHER HEALED.

Read S. Luke iv. 38, 39. (S. Matt. viii., S. Mark i.)

I. *Simon's wife's mother was taken with a great fever.*
Ib. 38.

So Christ found her. How has He found me? The fever of the soul is avarice, lust, ambition, passion. Do any of these hold me? Acknowledge thy disease, and open the door to Jesus. *Is. i. 6.*

II. *He came and took her by the hand, &c., and immediately the fever left her.* S. Mark i. 31.

All is hopeless, except God extend the hand of His mercy and lift us up. How often has He held out His hand and I took it not! Do I love my disease and cling to it? Help me, O Lord, lest I sicken unto death. *Jer. li. 9.*

III. *She arose and ministered unto them.* Ver. 39.

When healing is from God, it is indeed effectual. Too often it is partial. We wish to be cured by a miracle, and take no pains ourselves. But He would have us arise, give thanks, and serve Him. Whom do I really serve? myself or my Lord? *Ps. li. 12, 13.*

Text.

When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren. S. Luke xxii. 32.

HOW RIGHTLY TO FOLLOW CHRIST.

Read S. Luke ix. 57-62. (S. Matt. viii.)

I. *Lord, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest.*
Ib. 57.

A very good resolution, had he counted the cost. He who knew all things knew the motive, and warned him that he was to follow One who had not where to lay His head. Do I think of this? 2 Cor. viii. 9.

II. *Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.*
Ib. 59.

This disciple had been bidden to follow Christ. Even natural ties must be laid aside when God speaks; the world must take care of itself, the dead bury their dead. His will is the only true standard. So must I follow Him. S. Matt. x. 37.

III. *Let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house.* Ib. 61.

This one, like the first, offered to follow Christ; but his heart still lingered in his former home. They who would follow Christ must look forward, not backward. Have home affections had too much weight with me? Phil. iii. 13, 14.

Text.

Many are called, but few chosen. Remember Lot's wife. S. Matt. xx. 16; S. Luke xvii. 32.

Sixth Sunday after Trinity.

THE STORM AT SEA CALMED.

Read S. Matt. viii. 23-27.

I. *His disciples followed Him. And behold, there arose a great tempest.* Ib. 23, 24.

“But He was asleep,” in body, not in spirit. (*Ps. cxxi. 4.*) Tranquil in the midst of trouble, they followed Him into danger. Where Christ is, there may be both trial and temptation. Yet faint not, for He is with thee. *S. Matt. xx. 22, 23 ; S. James i. 12.*

II. *Lord, save us, we perish.* Ib. 25.

Were they wrong in running to Him who alone could save? Not in this; but they wanted faith in His power, sleeping and waking, to preserve. And they were fearful. In every trial give me confidence and an undisturbed mind, O Lord. *Is. xli. 10.*

III. *He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm..* Ib. 26.

First, the cause of the waves, then the waves themselves. Is my soul in a tumult? Ask where is the cause? Root out this. How often has God rebuked my passions! Oh, for that perfect calm which He alone can make! *Ps. lxxv. 7.*

Text.

The Lord shall give strength unto His people : the Lord shall give His people the blessing of peace. *Ps. xxix. 10.*

For thoughts on the Gospel for the day, see p. 275.

THE LEGION CAST OUT.

Read S. Matt. viii. 28-34. (S. Mark v., S. Luke viii.)

I. *There met Him two possessed with devils.* Ib. 28.

In the tombs, on the mountains, naked, fierce untameable. Such is the treatment of man by the evil one; and too many love it; bursting the bands of the holy law, rending the robe of grace, unconverted. *Ps. ii. 1-3.*

II. *When he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped Him.* S. Mark v. 6.

He, whom we fear not to sin against, was adored even of these evil ones. (S. *James* ii. 19.) What need of watching against those who implore permission to destroy us: and, if one come in, room may be made for many. S. *Matt.* xii. 45.

III. *If Thou cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine.* Ib. 31.

They really have no power, except God permit. (*Job* i. 9-12.) None over me, unless I open my heart to them, and close it to God. The swine were destroyed by their Maker, for the sake of this poor soul. All temporal possessions are worthless in respect of it. S. *Mark* viii. 37.

Text.

Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. I S. *John* iv. 4.

THE GERGESENES BEG CHRIST TO DEPART.

Read S. Mark v. 14-19.

- I. *(They) see him that was possessed . . . sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind. Ib. 15.*

Sitting at the feet of his Redeemer in humility, clothed with grace and the righteousness of Christ. Come to himself, the evil one cast out. Type of all penitents who, like Mary, sit at the feet of Jesus. There, Lord, may I be also. *S. Luke x. 39.*

- II. *And they began to pray Him to depart out of their coasts. Ib. 17.*

Rather lose the presence of Jesus, than the profits of an evil calling. The sure consequence of an earthly mind is a dread of His presence. Have I ever indulged in sin, until that presence was painful? Lord, pardon me. *Job xxi. 14; Ps. xxii. 11.*

- III. *He that had been possessed with the devil prayed Him that he might be with Him. Ib. 18.*

And He was accepted, but not exactly as he asked. He was made a preacher (ver. 19, 20) of the love of Jesus even to those who had begged Him to depart. His was the fruit of grace. Be mine, like his, the desire to dwell with Christ. To live, to die in Him. *Ps. lxvi. 16; lxxiii. 25.*

Text.

Leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation. Ps. xxvii, 9.

THE SICK OF THE PALSY BROUGHT TO CHRIST.

Read S. Mark ii. 1-12. (S. Matt. ix., S. Luke v.)

1. *One sick of the palsy—borne of four.* Ib. 3.

His miserable state is a figure of such as have neither strength nor resolution to walk or act for the glory of God. Would such a one be healed? These four: the knowledge of thy misery and of the goodness of God, faith in Him, and love of Him, will bear thee to Him. S. Matt. xi. 28.

II. *They could not find by what way they might bring him in.* S. Luke v. 19.

For the crowd prevented them. In the world is but little compassion; still they persevered, doing what they could. Do I do all I can for myself?—for others?—for God? Delay not to the morrow what can be done to-day. S. Mark xiv. 8.

III. *They uncovered the roof where He was, and . . . they let down the bed.* S. Mark ii. 4.

Think of the charity of these men, and of the master of the house, and imitate it. Think of the earnest boldness and importunity of one who knew his sickness, and desired health. Is my desire of holiness genuine? Act on it. S. Luke xviii. 7.

Text.

Men ought always to pray, and not to faint.
S. Luke xviii. 1.

THE SICK OF THE PALSY HEALED.

Read S. Matt. ix. 1-8.

I. *Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee.*
Ib. 2.

What words of love, enough to soften a heart of stone! And he had not asked so much. Now he was taught the cause of disease—sin. This must first be cured. Have I learnt this? To root out the cause? *S. John v. 14.*

II. *Certain of the Scribes said, within themselves, This Man blasphemeth.* Ib. 3.

There are never wanting such as pervert the acts of mercy of others. Do I indulge such a temper? Hear our Lord: "Why reason ye these things in your hearts?" He sees mine, as He saw theirs. *Heb. iv. 13.*

III. *(He saith) to the sick of the palsy: Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house.* Ib. 6.

Now he is healed. Learn of him three things needful for all who would not relapse into the diseases of sin. Arise, in the strength of Christ, by unceasing resolution. Take away the bed of sloth and evil desire. Retreat into thine own heart, God's temple; examine it. Abide quietly. *Ps. iv. 4.*

Text.

Him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out. *S. John vi. 37.*

THE DISCIPLES PLUCK THE EARS OF CORN.

Read S. Matt. xii. 1-8. (S. Mark ii., S. Luke vi.)

I. *His disciples were an hungered, and began to pluck the ears of corn, and to eat, &c. Ib.*

For their Master and they fared but hardly, and no one provided for them. His presence was their meat; the Father's will His. How should not this make me give up all anxious care for the body, and make Him my daily food! S. Matt. vi. 34; viii. 20.

II. *Thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the Sabbath-day. Ib. 2.*

Such was the malice of the Pharisees, ever looking out for cause of blame, and cloaking it under a pretext of zeal for God. Did they break no laws of God? How few of those who blame others see or know their own faults! Do I? S. Matt. vii. 1-5.

III. *But He said unto them, Have ye not read what David did? Ib. 3.*

They left their cause in their Master's hands, their and my Advocate. He defended them. He will defend me too when I suffer injury. Only I must be silent, not give railing for railing, but cast myself on Him. Rom. xii. 19.

Text.

Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you. 1 Pet. v. 7.

THE CALLING OF MATTHEW.

Read S. Matt. ix. 9-13. (S. Mark ii., S. Luke v.)

I. *He saw a man named Matthew sitting at the receipt of custom.* Ib. 9.

Happy are they on whom God looks, that they may look on Him. Here our Lord bids one sitting in the midst of earthly gain follow Him; and (S. Luke) "he left all, rose up, and followed" Christ. Hast Thou looked on me, O God? Have I seen? Do I leave all else to follow Thee? S. John i. 48.

II. *Levi made him a great feast in his own house.* S. Luke v. 29.

Gratitude, joy, zeal for the souls of others, gave this invitation. Humility, and love of sinners, accepted it. Christ might Himself appear vile among sinners; but He heeded it not, if He might win them. Have I any such love for others? 1 Cor. ix. 19-22.

III. *Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?* S. Matt. ix. 11.

Where should I have been, if my Lord despised such? Praise Him, my soul, who feeds with sinners, and bids them feed on Him. Do I murmur at others, or interpret what they do unkindly? Here should be my warning. Rom. xiv. 4.

Text.

A friend of publicans and sinners. S. Matt. xi. 19.

Seventh Sunday after Trinity.

THE ISSUE OF BLOOD HEALED.

Read S. Mark v. 24-34. (S. Matt. ix., S. Luke viii.)

- I. *A certain woman which . . . had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered. Ib. 25, 26.*

How they value health who have lost it! What pains, what sacrifices to recover it! But the health of the soul, of how much more value is it! Do I care so much for it? Do I labour and expend all upon it; or is it whole? *S. Matt. xvi. 26.*

- II. *When she had heard of Jesus, came in the press behind, and touched His garment. Ib. 27.*

So sure was she of the virtue that was in Jesus. May not I too approach Him in prayer, in His sacrament, the more eagerly for the crowd of evil that would keep me from Him? Who toucheth Me? It is I, O Lord, sick and sad, Thou knowest. *S. Mark ii. 17.*

- III. *She came trembling . . . and declared unto Him before all the people for what cause she had touched Him. S. Luke viii. 47.*

This was what our Lord desired—an open confession for her own sake and for the instruction of others. Fearful of unworthiness, willing to bear shame, truthful in her acknowledgments, and full of faith, she is welcomed in her humility as a “daughter.” A blessed example to me. *Ps. xxxii. 3-5.*

Text.

Thy faith hath made thee whole. S. Matt. ix. 22.

For thoughts on the Gospel for the day, see p. 320.

THE DAUGHTER OF JAIRUS RAISED.

Read S. Matt. ix. 18-26. (S. Mark v., S. Luke viii.)

I. *My daughter is even now dead, but come, &c., and she shall live.* Ib. 18.

High and low, young and old, rich and poor, one with another. This day may be my last. Rather should we die, than live to sin. If, unhappily, we fall, we should at once run in penitence to God, who alone can give life, pardon, and peace. To defer this is to run again into sin. *P.s.* xxix. 4 ; xc. 12.

II. *And when Jesus came . . He said unto them (the minstrels, &c.), Give place.* Ib. 23, 24.

All that is of this world must give way, if Jesus is to come in. She is not dead, but sleepeth. Type of those happy souls who are dead only to the world, but alive to God, and rest in Him. Have I banished the evil one and all his ? *S. Matt.* iv. 10.

III. *(He) took her by the hand, and called, saying, Maid, arise.* S. Luke viii. 54.

The hand of God alone can raise the fallen. Do I know mine infirmity ? do I fall under it ? Lay hold of His strength ; He bids thee arise. Why do I not yield myself to His will ? I am His. *Exod.* x. 3 ; *Rom.* xiv. 8.

Text.

He bringeth low, and lifteth up. 1 Sam. ii. 7.

TWO BLIND MEN RECEIVE THEIR SIGHT.

Read S. Matt. ix. 27-31.

I. *Thou Son of David, have mercy on us.* Ib. 27.

Their blindness was only of the body; for they had faith in Christ, and hoped in His mercy. There is a blindness of soul (is it mine?), clouded by evil affections, neither seeing the way of truth, nor receiving the blessed doctrines of Jesus. 1 Cor. ii. 14; Rev. iii. 17.

II. *Believe ye that I am able to do this?* Ib. 28.

All along the journey our Lord answered them not; still they followed, persevering in their prayer. Now He questions them, not for His own sake, but for theirs. Follow Him, though He give not instant consolation. Confess His power; wait for His mercy. S. Mark ix. 24.

III. *According to your faith, be it unto you.* Ib. 29.

Is this the measure of God's gifts? Not always, thanks to His mercy. Yet it may account for my lacking much which He wants to give (S. Mark iv. 25). He healed them, and bid them tell no man. Is Christ willing to be unknown, and do I seek the praise of men?

Text.

All things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive. S. Matt. xxi. 22.

THE DUMB DEVIL CAST OUT.

Read S. Matt. ix. 32-38 ; S. Luke xi. 14-26.

I. *They brought to Him, &c. And when the devil was cast out, the dumb spake.* Ib. 32, 33.

Observe the charity of those who brought the sick for cure, and the lovingkindness of Christ. Bless Him ; imitate them. But I may be dumb also, in the mention of God, from worldliness ; in the praise of God, from fear of man ; or in communion with God, from an earthly mind. S. John ix. 40, 41.

II. *The multitudes marvelled, saying, It was never so seen in Israel.* Ib. 33.

The poor and simple receive the mercies of God, and are thankful for them. But the Pharisees said, " He casteth out devils through the prince of the devils." They through envy blaspheme—a warning to all who impute evil to others. Is. liii. 3.

III. *Jesus went about all the cities and villages teaching . . preaching . . and healing.* Ib. 35.

Thus Jesus repaid their evil with good. So has He dealt with us sinners ; so with me. And ought I not to follow His example ? Do I ? If from love of God I serve others, their evil return must not restrain me ; I work not for them, but for Him. Heb. vi. 10.

Text.

They rewarded me evil for good, to the great discomfort of my soul. Ps. xxxv. 12.

THE IMPOTENT MAN AT THE POOL OF BETHESDA.

Read S. John v. 1-6.

I. *A great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered. Ib. 3.*

Am I in this multitude? There are those blind in spiritual things; men halting between God and the world; hearts dry in devotion, and withered away through sin. Have I even their anxiety to be healed? 1 *Kings* xviii. 21.

II. *Whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in, was made whole. Ib. 4.*

Here is a lesson of earnestness and diligence. Not the most sickly, not the longest afflicted was healed, but the first and most eager of cure. And if they for the body, how much more I for the soul? *Prov.* xii. 24; xiii. 4.

III. *A certain man was there which had an infirmity thirty and eight years. Ib. 5.*

Our Lord saw him, pitied him, and proved him. "Wilt thou be made whole?" This is, thanks to God, the great question of the Gospel. Wilt thou? What, then, are my desires? Do I cleave to sin, or do I hunger and thirst after righteousness? *S. John* v. 40; 2 *Cor.* viii. 12.

Text.

Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. Rev. xxii. 17.

CHRIST HEALS THE IMPOTENT MAN.

Read S. John v. 6-15.

I. *Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool.* Ib. 7.

Did he mean to blame the want of charity of others, or simply expose his own helplessness? Let not others say it of me. Nor can I say it truly. If I have no other, I have Jesus ever ready, and the fountain of His blood always open. *Heb. iv. 14; vii. 25.*

II. *Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.* Ib. 8.

Three lessons against spiritual sloth. Arise at once, and act on conviction; do not wait as if God would compel. Take away, renounce evil passions and lusts. Strive to walk in newness of life, going from strength to strength in the power of God. *Eph. v. 14.*

III. *Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.* Ib. 14.

Here is the command of God, and the fear of future judgment. Besides these motives are those of gratitude and love. "Behold, thou art made whole." Do each of these weigh with me? and which most? *2 Pet. ii. 21; Rom. vi. 1.*

Text.

Go, and sin no more. S. John viii. 11.

THE OCCURRENCES AFTER THE MIRACLE.

Read S. John v. 16-47.

I. *Therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus . . because He had done these things on the Sabbath. Ib. 16.*

Covering their malice under the garb of religion. So it must be with the faithful, to bear persecution. Would that I could say with my Lord, "My Father worketh," and "I work:" He in me, I in Him. How little is it so! 1 S. John iii. 21.

II. *The more . . because He . . said also that God was His Father. Ib. 18.*

Happy would it be with me were I hated, because God is my Father, and I His dutiful child; because He dwells in me, and I love Him. Far am I from this. How would it lessen my trials were it so! S. John xv. 18.

III. *The same works that I do bear witness of Me. Ib. 36.*

The witness of a good man is worth much. Such was the witness of John. But that of a good conscience, and a life full of fruits of the spirit, is the best. Such was the life of Christ. Such, by grace, should be mine, if I would glorify God now, and rejoice hereafter. S. Matt. v. 16.

Text.

If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye. 1 S. Pet. iv. 14.

Eighth Sunday after Trinity.

THE WITHERED HAND HEALED.

Read S. Matt. xii. 9-21. (S. Mark iii., S. Luke vi.)

I. *Behold there was a man which had his hand withered. Ib. 10.*

And they asked, "Is it lawful," &c. ? What, with this poor sufferer present, doubt the duty of mercy ! Christ, the true wisdom, escaped their snare. Follow Him. Fear not man. Do what is right. Leave the issue to God. *Acts iv. 19.*

II. *And He saith unto the man which had the withered hand, Stand forth. S. Mark iii. 3.*

Hoping by the sight of him to move their pity, but in vain. These who would save their own ass or ox would not have this sufferer relieved. Am I free from such evil thoughts ? With Christ, to neglect doing good is one with doing evil. *S. Matt. xii. 30 ; xxv. 45.*

III. *And (He was) grieved for the hardness of their hearts. Ib. 5.*

They were not turned by His mercy nor His power. They acknowledged not Him nor their neighbour, but still resisted Him. Well might He be grieved with them. May He not too often with me ! *Eph. iv. 30-32.*

Text.

As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men. Gal. vi. 10.

For thoughts on the Gospel for the day, see p. 289.

THE TWELVE APOSTLES CHOSEN.

Read S. Luke vi. 12-16. (S. Matt. x., S. Mark iii.)

I. *He went out into a mountain to pray.* Ib. 12.

While the Jews were plotting His destruction, He was planning their salvation, and teaching us to retreat from the world and its cares from time to time, to mingle contemplation with active duties. Do I follow His example? *Ps.* cix. 4; *S. Matt.* vi. 6.

II. *And continued all night in prayer.* Ib.

He was about to enter on a most important work; therefore He prayed the more earnestly. Would I do well and wisely that which I do? it must be by communion with God. *S. James* i. 5.

III. *And when it was day He called unto Him His disciples, and of them He chose twelve.* Ib. 13.

All the calls of God are of His own free will and His own gracious choice; not our worthiness. What is my vocation? Is it of God? If it is, can I fall in or from it? Judas was of the twelve! Then beware. *1 Cor.* ix. 27.

Text.

For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ. *Eph.* iv. 12.

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT.

THE FIRST BEATITUDE.

Read S. Matt. v. 1-12. (S. Luke vi.)

I. *And when He was set, His disciples came unto Him.*
Ib. 1.

“And He opened His mouth and taught them,” as He teaches all who come to Him, by indwelling, by inspiration, by guidance. Only, my soul, come to Him, attend to His words, and act upon them. *Is.* lv. 3.

II. *Blessed are the poor in spirit.* Ib. 3.

Who renounce earth and earthly things, desiring lowly to follow the lowly Jesus. This is a different judgment from that of the world. Does mine agree with it? There is a warning. Do I attend to it? *S. Luke* vi. 24.

III. *For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.* Ib.

And this is the encouragement. It is theirs now—for having and desiring nothing but Christ, it is within them (*S. Luke* xvii. 21),—and they have it hereafter (*Heb.* xii. 28). Are these my hopes?

Text.

Hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom, which He hath promised to them that love Him. *S. James* ii. 5.

SECOND AND THIRD BEATITUDES.

Read S. Matt. ib. (ib.); Ps. cxxxii.

I. *Blessed are they that mourn.* Ib. 4.

In contrition, for their own sins; in compassion, for those of others; in love, for the dishonour of God; in faith and hope, for their present banishment from their Father's home. Do I mourn for these, or from the desire of earthly things? *Ps.* cxxvi. 6, 7.

II. *For they shall be comforted.* Ib.

Here, by the consolation of the Spirit, by pardon, by assurance; and, unlike those who laugh now with the world (am I one?) (*S. Luke* vi. 25), hereafter by eternal consolation and joy. *Rev.* vii. 14-17.

III. *Blessed are the meek.* Ib. 5.

Those who by grace restrain all wrath and anger, who suffer patiently, who are gentle with the froward, who follow Christ. Am I such? *S. Matt.* xi. 29.

For they shall inherit the earth. Ib.

Now their own souls in peace and patience, and all the gifts of God with contentment; hereafter the land of the blessed. Is that my home? *Prov.* xv. 33.

Text.

He will beautify the meek with salvation. Ps. cxlix. 4.

FOURTH AND FIFTH BEATITUDES.

Read S. Matt. ib. (ib.); Ps. xlii.I. *Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst.* Ib. 6.

Not after the broken cisterns of this world's pleasure, but "after righteousness;" first, the righteousness of Christ; then by His grace the power to obey and do His Father's will in all things. But how far am I from this? *Jer.* ii. 13.

II. *For they shall be filled.* Ib.

Even in this life; for they trust God for all they need, and whatever they do is to His glory. And oh, how surely in the next with His presence and glory! See; is this my lot? *Ps.* xvii. 16; 1 *Cor.* x. 31.

III. *Blessed are the merciful.* Ib. 7.

Who to all God's creatures extend, according to their opportunity, mercies, spiritual and temporal, in love, and for Christ's sake.

For they shall obtain mercy. Ib.

In this life pardon and grace. In the next complete acceptance and glory. Oh, the mercy of God to me! What a model for mine to others! *Ps.* ciii. 4.

Text.

Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful. S. Luke vi. 36.

SIXTH AND SEVENTH BEATITUDES.

Read S. Matt. ib. (ib.); Ps. xv., xxiv.

I. *Blessed are the pure in heart.* Ib. 8.

They who, notwithstanding their imperfections, are in a state of grace, renouncing evil, with purified affections, loving God, striving to live for Him and in Him. Is my heart in such a state? *Is.* vi. 5; *1 John* iii. 3.

II. *For they shall see God.* Ib.

Now they have His presence, for He dwells in them, they see Him by faith, by contemplation, by love. Hereafter, when others (am I one?) (*Eph.* v. 5) shall be banished from Him, they shall "see Him as He is." *1 John* iii. 2; *1 Cor.* xiii. 12.

III. *Blessed are the peacemakers.* Ib. 9.

Who seek peace within, by subduing their passions; without, by charity, and promoting love and peace among others.

For they shall be called the children of God.

Would I be really one of His children? I must seek this grace of true charity—love to God; love to man. Is such my character? *1 Cor.* xiv. 33; *Ps.* cxxxiii.

Text.

The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable. S. James iii. 17.

EIGHTH BEATITUDE.

Read S. Matt. v. 10-12; S. Luke vi. 22.

I. *Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake.* Ib. 10.

Not for their sins; these bring with them their own consequences. But all are blessed who follow Christ, and they who would do so must expect to suffer with Him. Am I prepared for this, or do I shrink from it and evade it? 2 *Tim.* iii. 12; 1 *Pet.* iii. 14, &c.

II. *For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.* Ib.

Begun in this life in righteousness, joy, peace (*Rom.* xiv. 17); consummated in the next, where there is no more sorrow nor trial, but rest to the weary, and the world, the flesh, and the devil are no more. *Job* iii. 17.

III. *Blessed are ye when men shall revile you (hate you, separate you, S. Luke), &c., for My sake.* Ib.

This is not the blessing of the world, which brings with it no good (*S. Luke* vi. 26), but of God; whose blessing alone maketh rich (*Prov.* x. 6, 22). Yet, do I love the praises of men? or seek only that which is of God? I must choose!

Text.

Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer. Be thou faithful. Rev. ii. 10.

Ninth Sunday after Trinity.

CHARACTERISTICS OF CHRISTIAN MEN.

Read S. Matt. v. 13-16.

I. *Ye are the salt of the earth.* Ib. 13.

Before any true fruit is borne there must be a purging, cleansing, and refining of the soil. Such should Christians be in the midst of the world. Such a work should Christianity begin in my heart. *Mal.* iii. 3.

II. *Ye are the light of the world.* Ib. 14.

The next step, both for our own hearts and for the sake of others, is enlightening—the graces of the Holy Spirit, the ornament of Christian virtues and a Christian example. The light He gives to us we must reflect. *Phil.* ii. 15, 16.

III. *A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.* Ib.

A city! this is the idea of something complete in its government, officers, laws. Such, once more, should Christians be in their own hearts, and among each other; but all in Christ, their Captain, their King. Is my sufficiency in Him? Are we one in Him? *Eph.* ii. 19.

Text.

They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever. *Dan.* xii. 3.

For thoughts on the Gospel for the day, see p. 372.

A GOOD EXAMPLE TO BE SET FOR THE GLORY OF GOD.

Read S. Matt. v. ib.

I. *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works.* Ib. 16.

All that we do cannot be hid; all ought not to be known. Whatever must be known, let that be really—not only seemingly—for good and for the glory of God. 'What is my conversation, &c., especially where I can influence others?' *Rom. xv. 2.*

II. *And glorify your Father, which is in heaven.* Ib.

Here is the rule by which every intention of our heart is to be guided and tried. Do I leave things undone which would bring glory to God? Do I consider first the opinions of men? Or do I try to lead others, by my conduct, to serve Him? 1 *Pet. ii. 12.*

III. *Do not your alms before men to be seen of them.* Ib. vi. 1.

We are not to seek our own glory, even in good works: the glory belongs to God. He who seeks it for himself robs God. Without His grace we can neither will nor do any good thing. Do I acknowledge this as well in deed as in word? *Phil. ii. 13.*

Text.

Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy name give glory. Ps. cxv. 1.

THE LETTER OF THE LAW.

Read S. Matt. v. 17-21. (S. Luke xvi.)

- I. *I am not come to destroy (the law), but to fulfil.*
Ib. 17.

For, except in Christ, it could not be fulfilled. He alone could complete it and give it inward life. And, by His grace, it is even made easier for us to obey. S. John vi. 63.

- II. *One tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled.* Ib. 18.

In Him was fulfilled, to the very letter, whatsoever either the law or the prophets spake; for nothing that comes of God can fail. It is enjoined also on us. But can I, or do I, fulfil it? Alas! no. Acts xiii. 22.

- III. *Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called, &c.* Ib. 19.

His own example is the rule for His people; what He fulfilled they may not break. And all are bound together; the breaking of one is the breaking of all, and the despising small rules leads to a fall "by little and little"—it may be to the loss of heaven. S. James ii. 10.

Text.

The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. Rom. vii. 12.

THE SPIRIT OF THE LAW.

Read Ib. 21-29 and 31-42.

I. *Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees. Ib. 20.*

Of them, the letter of the law; of us, the spirit is required. Of them, ceremonial obedience; of us, that of the heart. We have all in Christ, and grace through His Spirit. The higher our profession, the more practically ought we to excel. S. Luke xii. 47.

II. *Ye have heard that it was said, &c. But I say unto you, &c. Ib. 21, 27, &c.*

Compare the old with the new covenant. For that, grosser sins were forbidden, things external appointed, a temporal reward promised. Ours regards sins of the heart, the very inmost soul, and an eternal kingdom. Does my life shew that I know this? 2 Cor. iii. 7-10.

III. *Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect. Ib. 48.*

How can we follow such a rule? Who can be perfect in any thing? how much less, as God, in all? By one only way can we hope to approach it—by love. Seek, then, to love Him fully; seek to know fully His love. In this is perfect happiness. Eph. iv. 1, &c., 12, 13.

Text.

Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required. S. Luke xii. 48.

REMOVAL OF THINGS THAT OFFEND.

Read S. Matt. v. 29-39. (S. Mark ix.)

I. *If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee. Ib. 29.*

In ourselves, the right eye is all that we see and delight in, all earthly things; in others, those who guide us, or are elders, superiors, &c. Do I cut myself off from all pleasures, and separate myself from all influence that leads me from God? *Job xxxii. 9.*

II. *If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off and cast it from thee. Ib. 30.*

In ourselves, this is all that we strive after and do in life; in others, our relations, friends, equals, who work in common with us. Are my objects and pursuits—are my friends and acquaintance—is our conversation—for God? *S. James iv. 4.*

III. *If thy foot offend thee, cut it off. S. Mark ix. 45.*

In ourselves, it may be our path in life, our footsteps, our example; in others, those beneath us or influenced by us. Is my path that of the just? Is my example and instruction good for others? Is their dependence on me good for my soul? If not, all must be cut off. *Ezek. xxxiii. 6.*

Text.

He who loveth father or mother more than Me (his own life also. S. Luke xiv.) is not worthy of Me. S. Matt. x. 37.

THE LOVE OF OUR ENEMIES.

*Read S. Matt. v. 38-48.*I. *I say unto you, Love your enemies. Ib. 44.*

"I"—He who first loved us when we were enemies, and reconciled us to God by His death. Have I any enemy? He is God's creature, my brother by redemption. Do I love and forgive him?—it is for my good and the glory of God. 1 *John* iv. 20; *Rom.* v. 10.

II. *Do good to them that hate you; and pray for them which despitefully use you. Ib.*

Have I charity towards him in my heart? Then are my actions consistent with it? Do I bless him with my mouth, pray for him, and serve him? How do I speak of him? What did Christ do for His murderers? 1 *Cor.* iv. 12; *Acts* vii. 60.

III. *That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven. Ib. 45.*

Such is the gain of those who follow Christ. Peacemaker indeed! To be like Him is to be His child. How has He not provided for me a sinner! How has He not forborne with me! Let me go and do likewise. *S. Matt.* xviii. 33.

Text.

Love worketh no ill to his neighbour. (And who is my neighbour?) Rom. xiii. 10.

ALMSGIVING, PRAYER, FASTING.—THE LORD'S
PRAYER (FIRST PETITION).

Read S. Matt. vi. 1-15. (S. Luke xi.)

I. *Thy Father which seeth in secret, Himself shall reward thee openly.*

For what? Alms in secret—prayer in the closet—fasting not seen of men. Do I these at all?—for His eye only? In the recess of the heart alone is communion with God. Christ sought it apart from the world. He is my ever-present example. Do I shut out all else but Him? *S. Matt. xiv. 23.*

II. OUR FATHER, WHICH ART IN HEAVEN. *Ib. 9.*

“Our Father!” words full of reverence, dutifulness, confidence, affection, which alone “art”—how great Thy majesty!—“in heaven.” Not in earth must my hopes be, lest my prayers reach not thither. Do I strive after and act under such affections? *Mal. i. 6; Eph. iv. 6.*

III. HALLOWED BE THY NAME. *Ib.*

Thyself acknowledged—Thy holiness esteemed—Thy goodness loved—Thy justice feared—Thy power submitted to—Do I make this a chief object of my prayers, and the end of my actions? *P. s. cl.*

Text.

Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Gal. iv. 6.

Tenth Sunday after Trinity.

THE LORD'S PRAYER (2D AND 3D PETITIONS).

Read Ib. and Ps. cxlv.

I. THY KINGDOM COME. Ib. 10.

And be set up within my heart (*S. Luke* xvii. 21), and among all the nations of the earth (*Ps.* xxii. 27). And again, Hasten, O Lord, the day of Thy coming, and of our eternal joy. But can I, do I, thus sincerely pray?

II. THY WILL BE DONE. Ib.

What more fitting? yet how difficult to pray this in earnest! His will ought to be ours, and the law of our own. Do I even obey His plain commands? Alas, then, how far short is this of seeking to know and to do His whole will! 1 *Sam.* xv. 13, &c.

III. IN EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN. Ib.

Should the obedience of children (1 *Pet.* ii. 16) be less than that of servants? Yet the angels are servants; we, in Christ, are children. Oh, that I had their pure love, their ready will to serve Him. *Ps.* ciii. 21.

Text.

That thy power, thy glory, and mightiness of thy kingdom, might be known unto men.
Ps. cxlv. 12.

For thoughts on the Gospel for the day, see pp. 99, 233.

THE LORD'S PRAYER (4TH AND 5TH PETITIONS).

Read Ib. and Ps. ciii. 1-14.

I. GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD. Ib. 11.

A spirit of dependence and contentment—the supply of necessities, not for luxuries—daily food as well for soul as body; these are what I ought to desire and ask. Do I ask for less? Do I crave after more? 1 *Tim.* vi. 8; *S. Matt.* iv. 4.

II. AND FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS. Ib. 12.

Do I think I have none? God forbid. I owe Him all, from whom I have received all: life, talents, grace. These I owe to His goodness. But there is another debt, which Christ alone can pay. The penalty of my sins. I confess them; I trust in Thee; but, “Sin no more!” *S. John* viii. 11.

III. AS WE FORGIVE OUR DEBTORS. Ib.

This condition Christ Himself has made. Do I fulfil it to others as He has fulfilled it to me? Is my pardon ready, full, free, as often as asked? Learn from thine own hardness, His mercy. *Eph.* iv. 26.

Text.

Forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. Eph. iv. 32.

THE LORD'S PRAYER (6TH AND 7TH PETITIONS).

Read Ib. and Ps. cxxi.

I. AND LEAD US. Ib. 13.

Are our sins washed away as we ask? The next, desire to sin no more. But I am in the midst of enemies and dangers. Do I know them? I cannot stand alone. Do I ask for help, and undoubtingly, and intending to use it? *S. Matt. xiii. 12.*

II. NOT INTO TEMPTATION. Ib.

Not altogether, that we may not be tried; but not overcome. Temptations bring with them humility, patience, trust in God. Do I ask Him, "Lead me not," and yet go into temptation. This is mockery. Do I avoid that against which I pray? *S. James i. 13, 14.*

III. BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL. Ib.

Every evil both of body and soul; but we must also resist ourselves. Do I frustrate my prayer by clinging to the evil, by slothfulness, by a wavering mind (*S. James i. 5-7*). Help me yet, O Lord, once more. *1 Pet. v. 8, 9.*

THINE IS THE KINGDOM—THE POWER—THE GLORY.

Text.

God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able. 1 Cor. x. 13.

OUR TREASURE IN HEAVEN, NOT ON EARTH.

Read S. Matt. vi. 19-21.

I. *Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth.*
Ib. 19.

In short, love not the world, its desires, pleasures, honours; sickness and surely death will put an end to all. Then whose will they be? Not mine! unless in their evil consequences. Leave, then, the love of things present. I *John ii. 15; S. Luke xii. 20.*

II. *But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven.*
Ib. 20.

For this is the home and patrimony of the Christian. What I would find there of present things I must send hence before me, by denying myself and glorifying God in them, and that ungrudgingly. *S. Luke xvi. 9; Rev. xiv. 13.*

III. *Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.* *Ib. 21.*

So ever has it been with men. Am I treasuring, then, for earth, where Satan reigns awhile; or for heaven, where Christ, the true treasure, is? Oh, let not my heart cleave to earth, but to Thee, my Lord and my God! *Is. lx. 2; Ps. cxix. 25.*

Text.

They desire a better country, that is. an heavenly; wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God. *Heb. xi. 16.*

THE SINGLE EYE.

Read S. Matt. vi. 22, 23. (S. Luke xi.)

I. *The light of the body is the eye.* Ib.

So with the soul; our spiritual sight, and all the ways through which truth or error may come in, these are its eyes. These should we use as such; in ourselves, faith, understanding, intentions; or in others, friends, teachers, guides, &c. S. John ix. 41.

II. *If therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.* Ib.

These all need be simple—single; not imbued with false, fleshly, and worldly principles. Thus only can I see what is and what is not pleasing to God, what tends to His glory. So shall my path be brighter and brighter. . Prov. iv. 18.

III. *But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness.* Ib. 23.

But if my faith is dim, my intentions selfish and impure, my understanding guided by the world, my friends, advisers, and companions ungodly, then must I get further and further from God, into ignorance of Him and His ways. Lord, preserve me! S. James i. 8.

Text.

He that . . shutteth his eyes from seeing evil, he shall dwell on high. Is. xxxiii. 15, 16.

WE CANNOT SERVE TWO MASTERS.

Read S. Matt. vi. 24. (S. Luke xvi.)

I. *No man can serve two masters. Ib. 24.*

But we have two who claim us: God, whose we are; the enemy, who desires to have us; the world, the flesh, the devil. Which do I choose? I cannot follow both. How often have I been tempted to try this! *Ps. cxvi. 16.*

II. *He will hate the one, and love the other. Ib.*

This must be, for they enjoin things opposite. Holiness, which God delights in, and Satan hates; lust, and all evil hateful to God, in which the evil one glories; and I have fixed my affections with one! Which? *Ps. xcvi. 10.*

III. *Or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ib.*

Each have a law; by one or the other we must be guided. We may cleave to God, and despise all earthly things, or we may neglect Him and cling to the world. *1 Kings xviii. 21.* In my weakness of purpose, in my infirmity, in my heavy struggles; by thy good Spirit help me, O Lord! *Rom. vii. 15, &c.*

Text.

As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. Josh. xxiv. 15.

TAKE NO THOUGHT FOR THE MORROW.

Read S. Matt. vi. 25-34.

I. *Take no thought for your life.* Ib. 25.

Be not over careful about bodily wants ; it is useless to be so. It implies want of trust in God. It leads to less care for the soul. Which is most precious ? Which have I most sought to provide for ? *S. Mark viii. 36 ; 1 Cor. vii. 32.*

II. *Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.* Ib. 32.

The care of these things should be left to Him who made and careth for us. His knowledge is a parent's knowledge. The heathen are anxious about such things, for they neither know nor trust in Him. Am I any better ? *1 Pet. v. 7 ; Ps. cxxvii. 1, 2.*

III. *Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.* Ib. 33.

His glory, our blessedness ; His gift, our example. We must strive to follow one, that we attain the other. But if I value worthless things more than these, how can I expect His grace ? Yet, Lord, this do I desire. Help me. *Phil. iii. 9-14.*

Text.

One thing is needful. S. Luke x. 42.

Eleventh Sunday after Trinity.

RASH JUDGMENT TO BE AVOIDED.

Read S. Matt. vii. 1-6. (S. Luke vi.)

I. *Judge not, that ye be not judged.* Ib. 1.

God has made us brethren, not judges. Christ alone is Judge of all. We may not intrude on His office. Justice requires us not to prejudge. Charity bids us hope the best. Whom do I judge? others or myself? S. John v. 22.

II. *With what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged.*
Ib. 2.

If justice and charity persuade not, fear may well do so. Can I abide the judgment of God? yet I must stand before Him (*Rom.* xiv. 10, 12). If I am no further excused than I have excused others, where shall I be?

III. *First cast out the beam out of thine own eye.*
Ib. 5.

Here is the real cure:—learn thine own faults first; then amend them. After that, God may enable thee to see and correct with charity the lesser faults of others. Till then I am inexcusable, if I judge them. *Rom.* ii. 1.

Text.

Who art thou that judgest another? S. James iv. 12.

For thoughts on the Gospel for the day, see p. 376.

PROMISES TO THOSE WHO PRAY.

Read S. Matt. vii. 7-12. (S. Luke xi., S. John xiv.)

I. *Ask, and it shall be given you.* Ib. 7.

Ask humbly, seek perseveringly, knock boldly,—all with knowledge of our own wants and God's bounty. Do I ask with a real desire to be answered? I ask for graces; do I desire the trials by which they are attained? *Is. xxi. 12; S. James iv. 3.*

II. *Every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth, &c.* Ib. 8.

Because He is faithful that promiseth. But we must ask in faith; and what God wills, not what we will. He will surely give what we ask, or something better. Do I trust Him, and resign myself? 1 *John v. 14.*

III. *If ye being evil, know, &c.; how much more shall your Father, which is in heaven, give good things to them that ask Him?* Ib. 11.

We are His children by adoption. He deals with us as a Father, and can do no otherwise, unless we rebel, and revolt from Him. Has it not been so with me? Is not this enough to make me trust Him? *S. Luke xviii. 7.*

Text.

The prayer of the upright is His delight.
Prov. xv. 8.

THE BROAD AND NARROW WAY.

Read S. Matt. vii. 13, 14. (S. Luke xiii.)

- I. *Wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction. Ib. 13.*

All who yet live are in the road, not at the end. But in which? The broad way is unbounded by the law of God, wide as our desires and lusts,—what liberty have I used in it? How have I followed the multitude? *Prov. xiv. 12.*

- II. *Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life. Ib. 14.*

It is not wide enough for the proud and worldly, for pomps, and pleasures, and display: no, all must be renounced, and each soul must enter stripped of all but Christ only. Have I found Him, and, with Him, this narrow way? "Few there be that find it!" *Acts xiv. 22.*

- III. *Strive to enter in at the strait gate. S. Luke xiii. 24.*

Nature will lead us in one way; spiritual striving and grace alone can lead us in the other. It is a cutting-off, a warfare, a race, a work. Do I need encouragement? The end is life eternal. *S. Matt. xi. 12.*

Text.

Let us labour, therefore, to enter in. Heb. iv. 11.

BEWARE OF FALSE PROPHETS.

Read S. Matt. vii. 15-20. (Jer. xxiii. 16, &c.)

I. *Beware of false prophets.* Ib. 15.

Such are within ourselves: self-love, evil affections and desires: these lead us to call evil good, and to desire it. Without are bad companions, worldly friendships, whose example and conversation mislead us. Have I such within or without? *Is.* xxx. 9-11.

II. *Which come to you in sheep's clothing.* Ib.

Almost all evil presents itself with an appearance of good, either present or future. Have I not found it so? Am I the more cautious? Is my eye single, my heart pure, that I may perceive aright? Here alone is safety. *2 Cor.* xi. 13, 14.

III. *Ye shall know them by their fruits.* Ib. 16.

Am I uncertain about it? What fruit has come of my friendships and of myself? Has it been for God's glory? Has it not rather been an offence to Him? Think, then, of His sentence (*Ib.* 19), "Every tree," &c.

Text.

Saying, Peace, peace, when there is no peace.
Jer. viii. 11.

OF DOING THE WILL OF GOD.

Read S. Matt. vii. 21-29. (S. Luke vi.)

- I. *Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven. Ib. 21.*

Neither hearing nor speaking prove us to be true Christians, unless we act as such. Have I in words served God; and in trouble called on Him? What have I done for Him? Where is my house? On the sand? or on the rock? *Ib. 24-26.*

- II. *But he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven. Ib.*

Conformity to the will of God and the image of His Son, this is our end. And this is the road to eternal life through Him. Do I seek to know His will? and to do it? (*S. James ii. 14-18.*) This is the house on a rock.

- III. *Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name, &c. Ib. 22.*

This, like other gifts, is of God, for the good of others. We may use it for them, and be cast away ourselves; or for our own glory, and so rob God of His. At the best, we are unprofitable. Lord, have mercy upon me. *S. Luke xvii. 10.* Thou art my Rock.

Text.

Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only. S. James i. 22.

THE LEPER CLEANSED.

Read S. Matt. viii. 1-4. (S. Mark i., S. Luke v.)

I. *Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean.*
Ib. 2.

A pattern for the prayer of the distressed; acknowledgment of God's power; submission to His will; reliance on His goodness. Do I exhibit such dispositions in prayer? not even desiring what He does not will for me? S. James iv. 3-7.

II. *I will; be thou clean.* Ib. 3.

Oh, the goodness of our Lord! and the blessed reward of humble confidence in Him! His will is ever for our good. Oh, that He would cleanse me by His healing touch. So He will, if I seek aright. 1 John v. 14, 15.

III. *See thou tell no man, but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer the gift.* Ib. 4.

If our Lord would not have His good works published abroad, how much less any thing that we can do? Learn to preach not thyself, but Jesus. Have I received gifts myself? Boast not of them, but go and shew forth His praise, wait in His ordinances on Him. 2 Cor. iv. 5.

Text.

Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed, for Thou art my praise. Jer. xvii. 14.

THE CENTURION'S SERVANT HEALED.

Read S. Matt. viii. 5-13. (S. Luke vii.)

I. *Lord, my servant lieth at home sick.* Ib. 6

The charity and piety of this heathen is an example to many a Christian master, who care for their beasts more than their fellow-men. What is my conduct towards those dependent on me? Can I hope for the ready answer to his prayer? "I will come and heal him." *Philemon* 16.

II. *Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldest come under my roof.* Ib. 8.

Deep humility, not vainglory, should be the consequence of the mercy and good gifts of God. What I know of myself, I ought not to mind others thinking and saying of me. Jesus within my vile temple! *S. Luke* v. 8.

III. *I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel.* Ib. 10.

How self-deceived we are! They who have less privileges we despise; but how often they are better than us! Good Lord, pardon my sins, my want of faith and obedience. Give me all I need, and withal a humble mind. *Phil.* ii. 3.

Text.

I am the Lord that healeth thee. *Exod.* xv. 26.

Twelfth Sunday after Trinity.

THE WIDOW'S SON RAISED TO LIFE.

Read S. Luke vii. 11-18.

I. *The only son of his mother, and she was a widow.*
Ib. 12.

Who can trust life, or any thing that hangs upon it? Yet how many do, and so die unprepared! Jesus met him in the gate of the city, the place of judgment. Death is the gate of eternity. I must also be judged. Oh, be at hand, then, good Lord, to save me. *Eccles. xii. 1.*

II. *He had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not.* Ib. 13.

His property is "to have mercy." In this is our hope; in this our consolation. Then weep not! Weep not for earthly losses. Love that only which cannot be lost. The love of earthly things must bring sorrow. The love of Christ is eternal. *Rom. viii. 38, 39.*

III. *Young man, I say unto thee, Arise.* Ib. 14.

What the Lord did for him, He does for us. He comes near by grace; touches the heart; calls us by His word. What, then, is my part? The passions which have borne me along must halt. My soul must awake and arise, and I be found speaking with Christ. *S. John xi. 28-30.*

Text.

Yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead. Rom. vi. 13.

For thoughts on the Gospel for the day, see p. 319.

THE MESSAGE OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.

Read S. Matt. xi. 1-6. (S. Luke vii.)

I. *Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?* Ib. 3.

Even in prison he was bent on his Master's service. It was not for his own sake, but for those whom he sent, that they too might know Christ. Do I put all my hope in Him? or look to any other? *Ps. xx. 7.* Do I try to lead others to Him?

II. *Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard.* S. Luke vii. 22.

Here were the proofs of His divine mission. His works of mercy: healing, giving sight, hearing, strength,—above all, life for the dead, the Gospel. Would I prove my heavenly vocation? Let it be by deeds. *S. James ii. 18.*

III. *Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in Me.* S. Matt. xi. 6.

They saw His power and His glory. It was needful to warn them of His coming cross and shame. And for me, too, this lesson is needful, lest I shrink from His reproach. Better men have fallen so. *S. Mark xiv. 27.*

Text.

Ye shall know them by their fruits. S. Matt. vii. 16.

JOHN COMMENDED BY CHRIST.

Read S. Matt. xi. 7-19. (S. Luke vii.)

I. *What went ye out into the wilderness to see?*
Ib. 7.

Not one blown hither and thither; to-day of one mind, to-morrow of another. Not one living in luxury and earthly comforts. Compare with this thine own inconstancy and unsettled purposes, thine ease, indolence, &c. *Eph. iv. 14.*

II. *Yea . . . and more than a prophet.* Ib. 9.

For he not only foretold, but pointed out to others the Messiah. The messenger sent to prepare the way for Christ. It is not the office we hold, but the way we discharge its duties, that is pleasing to God. Am I faithful in mine? *Prov. xx. 6.*

III. *Among them that are born of women, there hath not risen a greater.* Ib. 11.

This was true praise, for it was the praise of Christ. Would I have praise of God? I must follow the example of such as have, through grace, obtained it. In patience, in afflictions, in labours, &c. *2 Cor. vi. 5-10.*

Text.

Whose praise is not of men, but of God.
Rom. ii. 29.

THE CONVERSION OF MARY MAGDALENE.

Read S. Luke vii. 36-39.

I. *A woman . . . which was a sinner.* Ib. 37.

He who willeth not the death of a sinner, moved her to repentance. She went without delay, in faith, fearless of reproach. Her soul was at stake. Do I feel, do I shew the same earnestness? Or do I not think myself a sinner? *S. Mark ii. 17; v. 24-28.*

II. *Stood at His feet behind Him weeping.* Ib. 38.

She met the eyes of the guests, but not the eye of Jesus. This was true confusion. But we, when convicted, meet the eye of God with too little fear, while we shrink from the eye of man. Weep, then, in His presence, O my soul. *S. Luke xviii. 13.*

III. *And began to wash His feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, &c.* Ib.

All that had once been an instrument of sin, is now used for the worship and service of the Lord. This is indeed being a new creature. Christ had cleansed and turned that heart. He alone can purify mine. *Ps. li. 10, 15; Rom. vi. 13.*

Text.

He turneth the hard rock into a standing water, and the flint-stone into a springing well.
Ps. cxiv. 8.

CHRIST DEFENDS MARY MAGDALENE.

Read S. Luke vii. 39-50.

I. *This Man, if He were a prophet, would have known, &c.* Ib. 39.

How many mistakes from one rash judgment! He denied Christ and His omniscience; slandered a penitent; decided what God ought to do. Would I avoid such errors? I must censure myself, not my neighbour. *S. Matt.* viii. 1-3.

II. *I entered into thy house, thou gavest Me no water . . . but she hath.* Ib. 44.

Mary Magdalene was accused, but spake not. Christ was accused, and spake; not for Himself, but for her, and the accuser was convicted. Trust, then, to Jesus, and fear not man. *Ps.* cxi. 12.

III. *And He said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven.* Ib. 48.

What words of peace and consolation! Oh, that they may be mine also! But remember these, "For she loved much." Think of the power of love. Think! How much do I care for myself? how much for the world? how much for God? *S. John* xvi. 27.

Text.

Him hath God exalted . . . to give repentance unto Israel, and forgiveness of sin. Acts v. 31.

THE BLIND AND DUMB DEVIL CAST OUT.

Read S. Matt. xii. 22-37. (S. Mark iii.)

I. *One possessed with a devil, blind and dumb : and He healed him. Ib. 22.*

How Satan endeavours to gain that by which we may know or serve God ! He would have us blind, lest we see with the eye of faith ; dumb, lest we confess and praise God, and speak of Him to others. Beware, then, of his devices. *Rom. i. 20 ; x. 17.*

II. *He doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils. Ib. 24.*

Once before (c. ix. p. 261) they had said the same, envying, blaspheming—a fearful warning to us ! But why is it that I am not attacked as He was ? Do I deserve it less ? God forbid. “ We indeed justly, but He hath done nothing amiss.” *1 Pet. iv. 12, 13.*

III. *If I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you. Ib. 28.*

Why ? but because such victory is of God. Then cannot I expel the evil one from myself ? No ; but only in the strength of God. Watch, then, over thyself, and pray that he come not in. *1 Cor. iv. 20 ; 2 Cor. iii. 5.*

Text.

Who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil, for God was with Him. Acts x. 38.

THE SIGN OF THE PROPHET JONAS.

Read S. Matt. xii. 38-45.

I. *Master, we would see a sign from Thee. Ib. 38.*

Had they not seen Him heal the blind, the lame, the deaf? What more could they want? This is to tempt, not to honour God. Has He not done enough for me? Why do I not believe and obey? Do I wish to be spared all effort in His service? *S. Luke xvi. 31.*

II. *There shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas. Ib. 39.*

That is, the cross, and passion, and death of Christ. This is the one only sign for all. Christ crucified for us. We to be crucified to the world in Him. Do I receive these blessed truths? and act upon them? *S. Luke xxiv. 26.*

III. *The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation. Ib. 41.*

For they repented at the preaching of Jonas, whereas these (the Jews) had Christ among them, and repented not. How many might rise up against me, having far less privilege, but using what they have to more purpose! Think how many have I! *S. Matt. xxv. 29.*

Text.

I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me. S. John xii. 32.

Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity.

THE MOTHER AND BRETHREN OF JESUS.

Read S. Matt. xii. 46-50. (S. Mark iii., S. Luke viii.)

I. *Behold, Thy mother and Thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with Thee.* Ib. 47.

They stood without, waiting His time. But one told Him—that we might know His will, when tempted to prefer an earthly affection to a spiritual work. Do I never do so? Yet if God has a work for me, can I prefer to attend to others? S. Matt. x. 37.

II. *Who is My mother? and who are My brethren?* Ib. 48.

These—my disciples—who, loving and believing, bring forth fruits of faith themselves, and beget children unto God, leading and training others for Christ. 1 Cor. iv. 15.

III. *Whosoever shall do the will of My Father which is in heaven.* Ib. 50.

“The same is My brother,” &c. With Christ the one law is, “Lo, I come to do Thy will.” They who follow Him are one with Him by adoption, in relationship, in love. If this law guides me, I too shall be loved of Him and be His. S. John xiv. 23, 24.

Text.

My brethren are these that hear the word of God and do it. S. Luke viii. 21.

For thoughts on the Gospel for the day, see pp. 355, 6.

THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER.

Read S. Luke viii. 4-18. (S. Matt. xiii., S. Luke iv.)

I. *A sower went out.* Ib. 5.

The sower!—God going forth in His goodness, filling all with life; Christ going forth from the Father, and coming into the world; each faithful disciple who goes out into the world to spread the knowledge of his Lord. Think of all these benefits. *S. John* xvi. 28.

II. *To sow his seed.* Ib.

The seed!—The creatures of His hand; the blood of Christ, and all its fruit; the truths of His Gospel, the inspirations of His Spirit;—all these He hath sown. For all these, creation, redemption, grace, give thanks. And remember thy work, the garden of thy soul. *Gen.* ii. 15.

III. *And as he sowed, some fell by the way-side.* Ib.

The case of those whose minds are open to every vain and foolish thought, never collected in themselves, never fixed for an hour on God. These Satan readily gains. Lord, fence him out of my soul, and make me faithful. *Is.* v. 2-5.

Text.

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour. 1 Pet. v. 8.

THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER (*continued*).

Read S. Matt. xiii. 3-23. (Ib. ib.)

I. *Some fell upon stony places.* Ib. 5.

Hearts already hardened by evil habits; having no root (*S. Matt.*), no real depth of inward religion; lacking moisture (*S. Luke*), dry and barren in devotion and pious affections. What there is lies on the surface. Such an one begins much, perfects nothing,—soon withers away. Am I such? 2 *Tim.* iii. 7.

II. *Some fell among thorns.* Ib. 7.

The cares, and pleasures, and useless employments of the world. These fill the mind; prayer is distracted, the truth is stifled, the Spirit quenched, the soul lost! Learn self-restraint betimes. *S. Matt.* viii. 22.

III. *Other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit.* Ib. 8.

Each according to the measure of God's grace. This comes of hearing attentively, reflecting carefully, examining diligently, practising consistently, patiently, and constantly. Be not content with the lowest attainments; strive for the hundred-fold. *P.s.* cxxvi. 6, 7.

Text.

He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit. S. John xv. 5.

THE PARABLE OF THE TARES.

Read S. Matt. xiii. 24-30; Ib. 37-43.

I. *While men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat. Ib. 25.*

Among the best, the world, the flesh, and the devil strive to sow the seeds of evil and corruption. When is this evil done? While men sleep! When I am not watching is the time of danger. *S. Mark xiii. 37.*

II. *When the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. Ib. 26.*

At first the mischief could not be seen. We grow careless, time passes on, and the evil is seen! Our good fruit is corrupted with evil motives. We have let in the enemy *self*, and it may be evil companions, &c. Is this so with me? *1 Cor. xv. 33.*

III. *Let both grow together until the harvest. Ib. 30.*

See the patience of God, who bears with all our deficiencies, looking to gather in good fruit at last; then, surely, no evil will stand. Now is the time of amendment. Am I using it? *S. Matt. vii. 19.*

Text.

Let us not sleep, as do others. 1 Thess. v. 6.

THE GRAIN OF MUSTARD-SEED.

Read S. Matt. xiii. 31, 32.

I. *The least of all seeds.* Ib. 32.

Is this the figure of the kingdom of heaven? Yes; despised of men as Christ was. The poor, the meek, the persecuted, these are its members; its truths humbling, its hopes invisible, its rewards not now. Think—Is this the kingdom I desire? 1 Cor. i. 22-29.

II. *But when it is grown it is the greatest among herbs, &c.* Ib.

The truths of the Gospel, at first sown in the heart, are unseen; but if really there, they grow on and on till they bring forth much fruit, acceptable to God in Christ. Men see it—feel it. Has this been my course? Am I still advancing? 2 Pet. i. 5-9.

III. *The birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.* Ib.

Many find their home there; and if we are a part of that kingdom, they will find communion with us, and we with them. And there, in our hearts, holy desires and affections, the pure love of God, will dwell. Is my tree so filled? Acts iv. 13.

Text.

Leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection. Heb. vi. 1.

THE TREASURE—THE PEARLS—THE NET.

Read S. Matt. xiii. 44-52.

I. *The kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field.* Ib. 44.

Only to be obtained by those who seek—then to be laid up in the heart. No place to be esteemed where it is not to be found. Have I thus sought and laid it up? Do I only prize those places and persons among whom Christ is to be found? *Ps. i. 1; xvi. 3.*

II. *(Again) like unto a merchantman seeking goodly pearls.* Ib. 45.

Many seem goodly, one only is worth possessing. All are to employ their talents; whoso finds this must part with all that he hath to obtain it. What is this pearl? The love of God towards and in me. Do I hate all things, yea, and my very self, in comparison of Him? *S. Luke xiv. 33.*

III. *(Again) like unto a net that was cast into the sea.* Ib. 47.

Which gathered of every kind. Such is the visible Church; both good and bad are there. I am there; but not on that account safe. There will be a day of separation. Among which will my lot be? *Rom. ix. 6, 7.*

Text.

If thou seekest for her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures, then shalt thou understand . . and find . . Prov. ii. 4, 5.

CHRIST NOT RECEIVED IN HIS OWN COUNTRY.

Read S. Luke iv. 16-32. (S. Matt. xiii.)

I. *And when He was come into His own country He taught them.* S. Matt. xiii. 54.

He returned to Nazareth, where He had been brought up, after He had laboured in other places, so that His fame had gone abroad. Thus He strove to remove the hindrance of His poverty and obscurity, and lay claim to their attention. Am I thus considerate to others? *Prov.* xviii. 19.

II. *Is not this the carpenter's son?* *Ib.* 55.

They ought to have rejoiced; but they were offended in Him. The grace He had bestowed on others is at their own door; but they receive it not. That which was honourable they despise. And have I not, in practice, despised Thee, O Lord, and refused Thy ways? *Is.* xlix. 7.

III. *And (they) rose up and thrust Him out of the city.* S. Luke iv. 29.

Probably because (*Ib.* 23) He did not perform at once the miracles He had done elsewhere. He knew that they would not believe, and so added not in mercy to their condemnation. How much has He done for me, yet how often have I rejected Him! S. *Luke* xii. 48.

Text.

He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. S. John i. 11.

Fourteenth Sunday after Trinity.

THE APOSTLES SENT FORTH TO PREACH.

Read S. Matt. x. 1-15. (S. Mark iii., S. Luke ix.)

I. *As ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.* Ib. 7.

This is the special vocation of the Christian minister and evangelist. But all are bound to do so in practice, by avoiding useless, frivolous conversation; first themselves seeking, and then striving to win others to that kingdom. *Eph.* iv. 29; *Heb.* x. 25.

II. *Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils.* Ib. 8.

They who need spiritual comfort—the dead in sins themselves—the lepers, who infect others with their disease—public offenders,—these are subjects of Christian compassion or rebuke. Am I such an one? or if not, how do I deal with those that are? *Rom.* xv. 1.

III. *Take nothing for your journey* (S. Luke); *provide neither gold nor silver.* Ib. 9.

Neither means of defence, nor sustenance, still less of luxury: God provides all; we must not be anxious. Do I detach myself, at least in heart, from outward things, trusting Him for all? *S. Matt.* vi. 31-33.

Text.

Exhort one another daily, while it is called To-day. *Heb.* iii. 13.

For thoughts on the Gospel for the day, see p. 339.

PERSECUTION OF THE DISCIPLES FORETOLD.

Read S. Matt. x. 16-34.

I. *Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves.* Ib. 16.

Such is the mission of all apostolic men, and even of all consistent Christians. Their portion here is the enmity and hatred of the ungodly. Am I willing to bear it for Christ's sake? The reward is certain. *Rev. ii. 10.*

II. *The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his Lord.* Ib. 24.

As the Father sent Him, so sent He them, with His authority, to share His sorrows. Do I desire to fare better than He did? Rather should I glory in suffering for His sake. *Acts xx. 22-24.*

III. *Fear not them which kill the body; but are not able to kill the soul.* Ib. 28.

Neither fear the death of the body, nor those who can inflict it. We praise those who suffered for Christ: is our own spirit as theirs? Do I mortify in myself what is evil? Do I look to temporal or eternal rest? *2 Cor. iv. 16.*

Text.

Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. *2 Tim. iii. 12.*

THE GOSPEL NOT ALWAYS FOR PEACE.

Read S. Matt. x. 34-36.

I. *I came not to send peace, but a sword. Ib. 34.*

The peace Christ left us is good, but the peace Christians are tempted to make with the world is evil. Such peace is declaring war against God. Which do I strive to maintain? Peace with the world? or with God? *S. James iv. 4.*

II. *I am come to set a man at variance against his father. Ib. 35.*

The rule of the Gospel is, to love God above all things; all other affections must be subordinate. This nature resists; yet this must be striven after. Do I allow human affections to draw me aside? *Is. xlii. 8.*

III. *A man's foes shall be they of his own household. Ib. 36.*

His natural ties—still more himself. These are too often between the Christian and God. Have I not given to them and to myself time, talents, means, which were God's? Are they not often impediments to a free service of God? *2 Tim. iv. 10.*

Text.

I the Lord thy God am a jealous God. Ex. xx. 5.

WHO ARE UNWORTHY OF CHRIST.

Read S. Matt. x. 37-42.

I. *He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. Ib. 37.*

We think that we do not. Do we withdraw from the influence of all, even the dearest, who would keep us back from Christ? If not, we seek another treasure; we love others more than Christ; we are not worthy of Him. *S. Matt. vi. 21.*

II. *He that taketh not his cross and followeth after Me. Ib. 38.*

The life of Christ was a continual cross. They love each other most who sympathise most. Would I share His love? I must share His cross. It is not a mere choice; it is a necessity. *S. John xvi. 33.*

III. *He that findeth his life shall lose it. Ib. 39.*

The way to eternal life is to sacrifice the present life,—by mortifying the flesh so as to shew forth His life in us, or by going out of ourselves and dwelling altogether in Him. *Gal. ii. 20.*

Text.

Let the dead bury their dead;—follow thou Me. S. Matt. viii. 22.

THE YOKE OF CHRIST AN EASY YOKE.

Read S. Matt. xi. 25-30.

I. *Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden.* Ib. 28.

Come, "and I will refresh you." How good is our Lord—ready to relieve us of the burden of our sins, with which we are, or ought to be, oppressed! Am I? (*Is. liii. 2-4.*) How wilt Thou refresh me, Lord? Take My yoke—bear My cross.

II. *Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart.* Ib. 29.

Here is true rest for the soul, in the knowledge and following of Jesus. Is He my master, my example? Have I shut my ears to the teaching of the world? What have I learnt of Him—meekness? humility? *Phil. ii. 5, &c.*

III. *For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light.* Ib. 30.

His yoke—"His;" for He shares every burden with us, and so makes it light for us. What is it? Every law—every cross—every struggle against the flesh. Do I cheerfully bear these with and for Him, looking to the end? or do I resist? *Jer. vi. 16; S. Matt. xx. 22, &c.*

Text.

His commandments are not grievous. 1 John v. 3.

S. JOHN BAPTIST KILLED BY HEROD.

Read S. Mark vi. 16-29. (S. Matt. xiv.)

I. *Ask of me whatsoever thou wilt, and I will give it thee.* Ib. 22.

Even half of his kingdom he would give this damsel, who had pleased his sinful eye. But which is the greatest folly, his, or theirs who, for one sinful pleasure, would forfeit their title to the kingdom of heaven? *Heb. xii. 15, 16.*

II. *She being before instructed of her mother, said, Give me, &c.* S. Matt. xiv. 8.

What wonder if she asked amiss, who was instructed by an evil mother, a foe of the holy John? Yet have I not taken counsel of the world, the flesh, the devil, the enemies of Christ, and so slain him? Beware! *Heb. vi. 6.*

III. *And the king was exceeding sorry.* S. Mark vi. 26.

After he had committed himself. We ought to consider seriously first, then speak and act. He respected a wicked oath, a foolish damsel, a worldly company, but not God or His law. *S. Matt. x. 28.*

Text.

Blind guides, which strain at a gnat and swallow a camel. S. Matt. xxiii. 24.

THE FIVE THOUSAND FED.

Read S. Matt. xiv. 14-21. (S. Mark vi., S. Luke ix., S. John vi.)

I. *Send the multitude away, that they may . . . buy themselves victuals. Ib. 15.*

They had not faith in Christ. But these poor people who had patiently heard Him were not forgotten. "They need not depart." Do I fully trust Him? Well may I. *Ps. x. 14.*

II. *He took the five loaves, &c. ; He blessed, and brake. Ib. 19.*

First bidding them sit down on the ground. Those who would be fed of His grace must sit at His feet. What they had, they brought Him. It was but little. He restored it a thousandfold. Do I offer Him all I have? He will more than repay me. *Prov. xix. 17.*

III. *He departed again into a mountain, Himself alone. S. John vi. 15.*

For they would make Him a king. But He desired it not,—He, the King of kings. He departed to solitude and prayer. Do I look for honour and gratitude from those whom I have aided? Learn, my soul, of Him. *S. Luke vi. 34, 5.*

Text.

He hath filled the hungry with good things. S. Luke i. 53.

Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity.

CHRIST WALKING UPON THE WATER.

Read S. Matt. xiv. 22-36. (S. Mark vi., John vi.)

I. *The ship was in the midst of the sea tossed with waves.* Ib. 24.

They had been tossed all the night. He does not always remove our difficulty at once. We must strive resolutely, wait His time, and He will deliver us. Do I do so in the tempest of my passion, or do I give way? 2 Cor. xii. 7-9.

II. *When the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled.* Ib. 26.

They thought it was "a spirit." How often we mistake for an illusion the real presence and inspiration of our Lord; and so far from attending to His voice, we shun Him, and remain tempest-tost. S. Matt. xiii. 14, 15.

III. *Be of good cheer; it is I, be not afraid.* Ib. 27.

Into this difficulty our Lord Himself had brought them (S. Mark vi. 45). Now He is at hand to comfort them. Whatever trials He brings upon me, I will trust Him, my only sure helper.

Text.

Fear not, I will help thee. Is. xli. 13.

For thoughts on the Gospel for the day, see p. 285.

PETER WALKING TO MEET CHRIST.

Read ib.

I. *Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come unto Thee on the water.* Ib. 28.

Willing to trust himself to the command and power of Christ, if He would but call him, and glad to go even into danger, if it were but to Christ. Have I such faith and love? *Ps.* xl. 7.

II. *Beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me!* Ib. 30.

Yet how soon is all this confidence gone! Nothing will support us but a constant, stable faith. His confidence failed. He took the next best step, and called on his Lord. Is this my refuge in time of trouble? *S. Luke* xxii. 31-34.

III. *And immediately Jesus stretched forth His hand and caught him.* Ib. 31.

He did not calm the wind at once (*ver.* 32), but He did help His disciple, and then reproved him. How often has He helped me, when I have failed, not from the greatness of the danger, but from my want of faith. Have I not need of repentance and resolution? *Is.* xliii. 2; *Rom.* xiv. 4.

Text.

Thy right hand hath holden me up. *Ps.* xviii. 35.

THE DISCIPLES ACCUSED AND DEFENDED.

Read S. Matt. xv. 1-20.

- I. *Why do Thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders?* Ib. 2.

Which was the greater fault, that of the disciples, the neglect of an external ceremony; or that of the Pharisees; outward observance, inward negligence? God judges not the outward appearance, but the inner man. *S. Matt. xxiii. 25.*

- II. *Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?* Ib. 3.

The neglect of parents, under pretext of a sacrifice dedicated to God. The one a plain commandment, the other only acceptable when offered according to His will. Do I never offer that which is really not mine to give? *Rom. iii. 31.*

- III. *This people . . honoureth Me with their lips; but their heart is far from Me.* Ib. 8.

And so they were bad accusers of His faithful disciples. Their heart was with the world and their own evil objects. The praise of men, not the praise of God. Might not I be open to the same reproof? *Is. xxix. 13.*

Text.

Thou desirest truth in the inward parts.
Ps. li. 6.

THE CANAANITISH WOMAN.

Read S. Matt. xv. 21-23. (S. Mark vii.)

I. *And behold, a woman of Canaan . . . cried unto Him, saying, Have mercy on me! Ib. 2.*

She went out at once when she heard of Him. Took the first opportunity; laid her case before Him; asked for mercy; left herself in His hands. She was a heathen! I am a Christian! Which may best judge the other? *Is. xxxvii. 14, &c. (Jer. xxxv.)*

II. *But He answered her not a word. And His disciples came, &c. Ib. 23.*

As in other cases, He desired, for the good of others, that her faith and humility should be known; and for her own, that it should be tried. But the professed disciples, what would they have? Freedom from a trouble, for their own ease, not for God's glory. Is this Christianity? *S. John vi. 26. (S. Matt. xiv. 13.)*

III. *I am not sent, but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Ib. 24.*

And He too, the merciful and good, seems unmoved by her and them. Still she perseveres. That is what He desires. That is what I will do, and the good Shepherd will hear me. *Ps. cxix. 176.*

Text.

Therefore will the Lord wait that He may be gracious. Is. xxx. 18.

THE WOMAN'S DAUGHTER HEALED.

Read S. Mark vii. 24-30.

I. *It is not meet to take the children's bread and to cast it unto the dogs.* Matt. xv. 26.

Full of faith and hope, she still pressed her entreaty to Him who, if He pleased, could grant all her desire. What a seemingly bitter answer. How apparently unlike our Lord. How do I who deserve them bear such rebuffs? How did she? 1 *Pet.* ii. 20.

II. *Truth, Lord, yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table.* Ib. 27.

Without murmur, without an undutiful answer, she still pleads. How? Acknowledging her own vileness; pleading the love of a master even for his dogs. How much more that of Christ for His suppliant. S. *Matt.* viii. 8.

III. *O woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt.* Ib. 28.

He waited to be gracious, to confirm her in faith, patience, and then grant all her desire. Learn, then, my soul, to rely on His goodness. on His power, on His promise, and persevere. S. *Luke* xviii. 7.

Text.

The trying of your faith worketh patience; but let patience have her perfect work. S. James i. 3, 4.

THE DEAF AND DUMB HEALED.

Read S. Matt. vii. 31-37.

I. *He took him aside.* Ib. 33.

The spiritually deaf and dumb are not to be healed in the bustle of the world. They must come aside, stop their ears to its voice, look to heaven and heavenly things, and learn to pray. Have I been thus led of God? *Hos. ii. 14.*

II. *And saith unto Him, Ephphatha.* Ib. 34.

How often has He bid us open our hearts to Him, and we have not! If we let loose our tongues, how often it is but to speak vanity—calumny! He alone can soften the heart of stone. *Ps. cxiv. 8.*

III. *He charged them that they should tell no man.* Ib. 36.

Unwilling even to receive the praise that was due. How unlike me! Yet they could not be restrained from praising Him who had done all things well. Such was their gratitude. Is mine such? *Ps. cxix. 171.*

Text.

Open Thou my lips, and my mouth shall shew forth Thy praise. *Ps. li. 15.*

THE FOUR THOUSAND FED.

Read S. Mark viii. 1-9. (S. Matt. xv.)

I. *I have compassion on the multitude.* Ib. 2.

How many were drawn around Him by His teaching: am I among that number? forgetful even of my daily wants, if I may but wait on Him. He feels the same compassion now. He cares for them who trust on Him. *Ps. xxxvii. 3-5.* Do I care for others?

II. *If I send them away fasting to their own houses, they will faint by the way.* Ib. 3.

How mercifully He considers our infirmities and necessities. There is no fear of His failing us. The fear is that we fail ourselves and Him. *Ps. xxiii. 1.*

III. *He took the seven loaves, &c.; so they did eat, and were filled.* Ib. 6, 8.

A type of all His perfect gifts, and the seven-fold gifts of the Spirit. These He gave to His disciples to set before them. These now, through the ministry of His Gospel (2 *Tim.* ii. 2), He sets before me. Am I hungry? Eat, my soul, and be filled. (*Is. lv. 1.*) Gather up the fragments, of time, health, &c., that nothing be lost.

Text.

He satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness. *Ps. cvii. 9.*

Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity.

THE LEAVEN OF THE PHARISEES.

Read S. Matt. xvi. 1-12. (S. Mark viii.)

I. *His disciples had forgotten to take bread.*
Ib. 5.

How blessed that communion with God which makes one even to forget the necessities of the body, and seek that Word which is as needful as daily bread! Which do I prize most? *S. Matt. xvii. 4.*

II. *Why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have brought no bread?* Ib. 8.

Why take such thought for the body? Does not God care for it? How sweet and easily borne every path of life would be if I resigned all to His providence! *S. Matt. vi. 31-33.*

III. *Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.* Ib. 6.

That is, the maxims of the world, the principles of self-love, and of the old man. Of all this let me beware, lest it corrupt my soul, and the true bread be no longer my desire. *S. John vi. 34.*

Text.

A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. 1
Cor. v. 6.

For thoughts on the Gospel of the day, see p. 293.

THE BLIND MAN OF BETHSAIDA CURED.

Read S. Mark viii. 22-26.

I. *They bring a blind man . . . and He led him out of the town.* Ib. 22, 23.

Here He had done many miracles, and they believed not. In unbelief and neglect of privileges and of God's grace there is no way of salvation, no healing of the soul. How much have I neglected these! S. *Matt.* xi. 21.

II. *I see men, as trees, walking.* Ib. 24.

The first beginnings of grace opened his eyes a little. Still men (things human) appeared to him large, beyond their true size. Do they appear of great importance to me? My spiritual sight is but dim. Ps. xiii. 3.

III. *He put His hands again upon his eyes . . . and he saw every man clearly.* Ib. 25.

Our Lord waited to complete his cure little by little. The blind man used what he had; Christ perfected His work of mercy. Does God's hand appear shortened towards me? Is it not that I am slothful towards Him, and misuse His gifts? S. *James* iv. 3.

Text.

He hath sent Me . . . to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind.
S. *Luke* iv. 18.

THE CONFESSION OF PETER.

Read S. Matt. xvi. 13-20. (S. Mark viii., S. Luke ix.)

I. *Whom do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?*
Ib. 13.

Not for vain curiosity, but for the instruction of His disciples, Jesus asked. He seeks to be known of us for our, not for His good. Though men knew not who He really was, they could speak no real evil of Him. Can I attain this? S. John xii. 30.

II. *But whom say ye that I am? Peter saith, Thou art the Christ, &c.* Ib. 15, 16.

To whom much is given, of him much is required. They who have nearer access to Him are expected to know Him more truly. Do I profess Him also to be Christ? Where is His honour? What is my service of Him? what of the world? Mal. i. 6.

III. *Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee.*
Ib. 17.

For God who is in heaven alone can reveal divine truths to us. The knowledge of the world avails not for Divine wisdom. Do I listen to the teaching of the world, or do I open the ears of my heart to God? 1 Cor. ii. 14.

Text.

Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief.
S. Mark ix. 24.

CHRIST FORETELLS HIS DEATH, AND REPROVES PETER.

Read S. Mark viii. 31-33. (S. Matt. xvi., S. Luke ix., xviii.)

I. *The Son of Man must suffer many things.* Ib. 31.

This He predicted immediately on the confession of His being the Son of God; for this is not enough, unless we believe also that He suffered for us. In mercy, too, He prepared His followers for their cross. *Acts* iii. 18.

II. *Peter took Him, and began to rebuke Him, saying, &c.* S. Matt. xvi. 22.

Christ says, "It must be." His disciple should not say, "Far be it." Had he considered the will, the command of God, he had not been so rash with his lips. How often do I err from want of consideration! *Gen.* xviii. 25.

III. *Get thee behind Me, Satan; thou art an offence unto Me.* Ib. 23.

With Him is no respect of persons. If His faithful disciple deny his Lord, his Lord will rebuke and chastise. Christ is not turned from His purpose of mercy. Nor must I listen to the nearest or dearest who would lead me away from Him. *Rev.* ii. 20.

Text.

Not only to believe, . . . but also to suffer.
Phil. i. 29.

THE CROSS TO BE BORNE AFTER CHRIST.

Read S. Matt. xvi. 24-28. (S. Mark viii., S. Luke ix.)

I. *If any man will come after Me.* Ib. 24.

None is compelled; the way is open to all. But a good and determinate will is needful; but whosoever has it must deny himself first in all that is of the old man. How little have I learned even of the first beginnings! *Rev.* xxii. 17; 1 *Chron.* xxviii. 9.

II. *Let him . . . take up his cross.* Ib.

This is another needful step in the Christian course. Whatever God wills, though it be contrary to either bodily or mental desires, we are to take up, that is, to bear in all its length, and breadth, and depth. Is such my purpose? *Heb.* xi. 25.

III. *And follow Me.* Ib.

In renouncing, in sustaining, in well-doing; and if we follow Him it must be for ever, even unto death and into eternity. The way is not described: be it rough or smooth, am I prepared to walk in it? *S. John* xiii. 36, 37.

Text.

He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness. *S. John* viii. 12.

THE TRANSFIGURATION OF CHRIST.

Read S. Matt. xvii. 1-9. (S. Mark ix., S. Luke ix.)

I. *Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John.* Ib.

To be witnesses of His glory. Up to a high mountain—away from noise—apart from the world—three only out of the twelve. The kingdom of God must be sought thus; it is not to be found in the world. *S. Luke* xvii. 21.

II. *As He prayed, the fashion of His countenance was altered.* S. Luke ix. 29.

True fervent prayer changes a man; even men may take knowledge of him that he has been with Jesus. Is my countenance bright with Divine fervour? or do I not commune enough with God? *Acts* iv. 13; *Exod.* xxxiv. 29, 30.

III. *And behold there appeared unto them Moses and Elias.* S. Matt. xvii. 3.

These holy men could taste of heaven even on earth. They spoke of His Passion; this was to be the real cause of our only true joy. Even in the midst of such thoughts His face shone. For great is the reward. Is mine treasured up there? *S. Matt.* v. 12.

Text.

A witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory. 1 Pet. v. 1.

THE WISH OF PETER ON THE MOUNT.

*Read S. Mark ix. 2-8.*I. *Master, it is good for us to be here. Ib. 5.*

So thought S. Peter when joy and glory were around. They who desire religion when pleasant and easy, but sleep (*Luke x. 32*) when trials are spoken of, will, with Peter, deny Christ in the hour of temptation. Do I really embrace it at other times? *S. Matt. xiii. 21.*

II. *Let us make three tabernacles. Ib. .*

It may be good for us to be here; but is it good any where on earth to fix our tent? No, not even for the sake of spiritual pleasures, still less for earthly. Peter was blamed even for the former. Do not I deserve rebuke for the latter? *S. Luke xii. 19, 20.*

III. *While He thus spake, there came a cloud and overshadowed them. S. Luke ix. 34.*

When we trust in outward consolations, how soon a passing cloud overshadows them, and the joy of our eyes is gone! Is my foundation deeper than the surface? or when trial comes, am I cast down? *Jer. iv. 20; S. Luke xxiv. 31.*

Text.

Our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding. 1 Chron. xxix. 15.

Seventeenth Sunday after Trinity.

THE VOICE FROM HEAVEN.

Read S. Luke ix. 28-36.

- I. *This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*
S. Matt. xvii. 5.

This witness came while Christ spake of His Passion; and, as some have thought, on the mount where He was tempted of Satan. They are true sons of God who overcome the evil one, and suffer for His name's sake. S. John xv. 13.

- II. *Hear ye Him.* Ib.

He is our master. To hear Him is hard to the carnal mind. Even Peter had put off His warning voice. Now He speaks of His Passion; and God bids us hearken. Do I? S. John vi. 60-63.

- III. *When the disciples heard it they fell on their face.*
Ib. 6.

Hence learn humility, and it may be also our natural fear of the doctrine of the Cross which was thus sealed from on high. Do I at once fear God and gird myself up for my appointed trials. Acts xiv. 22.

Text.

They that hear shall live. S. John v. 25.

For thoughts on the Gospel for the day, see pp. 366, 7.

THEY GO DOWN FROM THE MOUNT.

Read S. Matt. xvii. 1-9.

I. *And Jesus said, Arise, and be not afraid.*
Ib. 7.

Christ is at hand in an instant, their comfort in their trouble. Where He is we need not fear. We need only to arise at His bidding, and be of good courage. *Ps.* xviii. 29.

II. *And when, &c. . . . they saw no man, but Jesus only.* Ib. 8.

Every thing was gone—the voice, the cloud, Moses, Elias, the brightness of face and raiment—the lowly Jesus only remained. Whatever happens, whether in joy or sorrow, seek only Him. He only will be surely found. He only abideth. *Ps.* lxxiii. 25.

III. *Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man.* Ib. 9.

The favours and grace of God are best received in humble gratitude, and silence of ourselves. (*Ps.* cxix. 11.) All is from Him. Nothing is really our own, and we need not boast. Rather let me see that I receive not His gifts in vain. Do I? *1 Cor.* xv. 10.

Text.

He bringeth low, and lifteth up. *1 Sam.* ii. 7.

THE LUNATIC CHILD BROUGHT TO CHRIST.

Read S. Mark ix. 14-22. (S. Matt. xvii.)

I. *Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is lunatic.* S. Matt. xvii. 15.

One incapable of controlling his passions, falling into the fire of anger and concupiscence, or the flood of iniquity; moreover, deaf and dumb in divine things. A miserable condition. Help me to know myself, and, if such, to repent. *Ps. cxix. 25.*

II. *But Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation.* Ib. 17.

Might not the Lord so speak of me and to me, as one whom He could not abide with? Yet mark His mercy; He offers help: "Bring him to Me." To Thee, Lord, may I come with all my sorrows. *2 Cor. i. 5-7.*

III. *And they brought him.* S. Mark ix. 20.

For sinners do not go to God of their own accord, or by their own power; but, like this poor child, even struggle and resist the friendly hand that would guide them to Him. How long, how long has it been so with me? S. *John vi. 44.*

Text.

Remember not the sins of my youth. Ps. xxv. 7.

THE LUNATIC CHILD CURED.

Read S. Matt. xvii. 14-21.

- I. *If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.* S. Mark ix. 23.

What a promise to faith! What a reproof to me who profess to believe! This poor man cried, "Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief." So God leads on to perfection those who begin in earnest; and they who persevere will receive the crown. *Phil. i. 6; Rev. ii. 10.*

- II. *I charge thee come out of him, and enter no more into him.* Ib. 25.

Such is God's will for all; that sin once purged out shall not return. But how often do I invite back the enemy? Christ cast out this one. Oh, that He would cast it altogether forth from me. *S. Matt. xii. 45.*

- III. *Why could not we cast him out?* S. Matt. xvii. 19.

Because of unbelief. This is the root of all failures. Belief of my danger, of God's love, of Christ's atonement, of the Spirit's power,—this would make me able in Him to do all things. *Phil. iv. 13.*

Text.

Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin. Heb. xii. 4.

CHRIST PAYS THE TRIBUTE MONEY.

Read S. Matt. xvii. 24-27.

I. *Doth not your Master pay tribute? He (Peter) saith, Yes. Ib. 24, 25.*

They wished Him to pay that which He owed not, and we blame their demand. But we continue too often in sin, and yet expect grace and pardon as if it were a debt. How often have I sinned, hoping that grace will abound? *Rom. vi. 1.*

II. *Jesus saith, Then are the children free. Ib. 26.*

And He the Son of God first of all was free. Yet, O Lord, it would go ill with us if Thou doest nothing from which Thou mightest be free. Oh, that I could do for Thee that to which I am bound, by duty, love, gratitude, &c. 1 and 2 *Cor. viii. 9.*

III. *Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them . . . take and give unto them for Me and thee. Ib. 27.*

Though the fault might rest with them, Christ in charity would avoid the offence. Do I follow Him in this? (Remember, by the way, this proof of His poverty and of His miraculous power.) *S. Matt. xviii. 7.*

Text.

Not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness. 1 Pet. ii. 16.

CHRIST COMMENDS THE HUMBLE AND CHILDLIKE.

Read S. Matt. xviii. 1-6. (S. Mark ix., S. Luke ix.)

Compare 2 Pet. ii. and Jude.

I. *Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?*
Ib. 1.

How frail is human nature! What a strife for the disciples of the lowly and meek? Pride began with the angels, continued in Adam, remains in us. Alas, how much in me!
Prov. xiii. 10.

II. *Whosoever shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest, &c.* Ib. 4.

And not only so; but except we (v. 3) become as little children, we cannot enter there. Humility is a most necessary step towards attaining it. Have I taken that first and lowest step? *Mic.* vi. 8.

III. *In heaven their angels do always behold the face of My Father which is in heaven.* Ib. 10.

By pride hell began. With the humble and obedient heaven is filled. There even now dwell the angels of Christ's little ones on earth, beholding His face. There with them may I find a place through Him. *Ps.* lxviii. 17.

Text.

Seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not. Jer. xlv. 5.

OF THE REPROOF OF A BROTHER.

Read S. Matt. xviii. 15-20. (S. Luke xvii.)

- I. *If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault. Ib. 15.*

Here learn Christian charity on both sides. Reproof is to be given and received in love, for Christ's sake, for the sake of the souls both of him who gives and him who receives. *Ezek. iii. 18.*

- II. *Tell him his fault between thee and him alone. Ib.*

The reproof must be in private, as between brethren. If the sin is against thyself, none need know it but thee. Would not I desire to be so dealt with? Let me so deal with others. *S. Matt. vii. 12.*

- III. *If he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. Ib.*

To both the gain is great. To one, the gain is a brother and a clear conscience; to the other, receiving the reproof in humility, the gain is, his own soul, his brother's love, the peace of God. So may I act in either case. *Ps. cxli. 5.*

Text.

He that regardeth reproof shall be honoured. Prov. xiii. 18.

Eighteenth Sunday after Trinity.

THE PARABLE OF THE DEBTOR.

Read S. Matt. xviii. 21-27.

I. *The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a certain king, &c. Ib. 23.*

I am His servant, His debtor. To Him I owe all; to Him I must give account. I have nothing to pay. Must I too be sold, and lose my freedom? Alas! I have by sin. *Rom. vi. 16.*

II. *Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. Ib. 26.*

How often has God had patience with me in a less earnest prayer! When angels sinned, in an instant they fell; but, of God's mercy, I am not consumed! Jesus's blood hath purchased this. *Lam. iii. 22.*

III. *The lord was moved with compassion. Ib. 27.*

“And forgave him all that debt.” And He has forgiven me, released me from the slavery of sin, and adopted me as His child. Have I deserved such favours? How do I strive to repay them? How merciful is God! *Exod. xxxiv. 7.*

Text.

I said, I will confess my sins unto the Lord, and so Thou forgavest the wickedness of my sin. Ps. xxxii. 5.

For thoughts on the Gospel for the day, see p. 398.

THE INGRATITUDE OF THE DEBTOR.

Read Ib. 28-35.

I. *Pay me that thou owest. Ib. 28.*

What an ingratitude! What a want of charity! Even the fellow-servants are shocked. Do I not see the wickedness of such a return? Has Christ forgiven me nothing? What do I forgive others? *Eph. iv. 32.*

II. *Shouldst not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant? Ib. 33.*

We strive to have one law for ourselves, another for our brethren. Such is not well-pleasing to God. Should I be content if what I render to others God were to render to me? *Rom. ii. 3.*

III. *And his lord was wroth. Ib. 34.*

How heinous must be ingratitude in God's sight! If all that He has once forgiven is again required! Yet it may be so with me if I forget Him and sin against charity. *Ezek. xviii. 24.*

Text.

He shall have judgment without mercy that hath shewed no mercy. S. James ii. 13.

CHRIST REFUSES TO GO UP TO THE FEAST OF
TABERNACLES.

Read S. John vii. 1-9.

I. *Go into Judæa, that Thy disciples also may see the works that Thou doest.* Ib. 3.

They desire His works rather to redound to their own glory than to His. Zeal for Him was their excuse for ambition. How often do I plead for myself when appearing to do so for others! *Acts viii. 19, &c.*

II. *No man doeth any thing in secret.* Ib. 4.

How often we attribute motives to others, which are in truth only our own! So it was with the disciples. If I examine myself, I shall often find it so with me. *Rom. ii. 1.*

III. *My time is not yet come.* Ib. 6.

He would wait the will of His Father, and bide His time. Such too is our duty. All our times and seasons are in His hand. Do I continually bear this in mind, and act upon it? *Ps. xxxi. 15.*

Text.

Tarry thou the Lord's leisure. Ps. xxvii. 16.

CHRIST REJECTED BY THE SAMARITANS.

Read S. Luke ix. 51-56. (S. John vii.)

- I. *He stedfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem. S. Luke ix. 51.*

That place where death awaited Him! What an example to me of courage and constant resignation to the Divine will! Oh, that He would help me in my trials to be steadfast in the right path. *Is. l. 7.*

- II. *They (the Samaritans) did not receive Him. Ib. 53.*

Why? Because He was in the way to Jerusalem. If we suspect and reject those who are not of a party with ourselves, we follow the world and shut out Christ. *S. Mark ix. 38.*

- III. *The Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. Ib. 56.*

The disciples would have vengeance; the Master will have mercy. Theirs has the semblance of devotion; His the true charity. We know not what spirit we are of; let us try and learn of Him who came to die for us. *2 Cor. xi. 14.*

Text.

Whosoever shall receive Me, receiveth not Me, but Him that sent Me. S. Mark ix. 37.

THE TEN LEPERS CLEANSED.

Read S. Luke xvii. 11-19.

I. *There met Him ten men that were lepers. Ib. 12.*

They stood afar off, conscious of sin, desiring pardon and cleansing. So my soul apply to Jesus for spiritual cleansing, humbled in the dust, sensible of entire unworthiness. *S. Luke v. 8.*

II. *Go, shew yourselves unto the priests. Ib. 14.*

A pattern of charity combined with dutifulness. He desired to cure them, but would not break an ordinance. Would that I never broke one! They obtained their desire; so may I by grace. *1 Sam. xv. 22.*

III. *One of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back . . . and glorified God. Ib. 15.*

The rest gave no thanks; yet they are only like me. How much I have received! How little have I done! Gratitude is the best use of a blessing; let me exercise it towards my beneficent God. *Is. v. 4.*

Text.

Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Eph. v. 20.

CHRIST TEACHES OPENLY IN THE TEMPLE.

Read S. John vii. 10-31.

I. *Then went He also up unto the feast. Ib. 10.*

And there was much murmuring about Him. What else can be expected of the world? What else do I look for? Am I prepared for the dissatisfaction of others, and their unwillingness to do justice to me? *S. John xv. 19.* Do I deserve more?

II. *About the midst of the feast, Jesus went up into the Temple and taught. Ib. 14.*

Not at first—when their minds were excited: so prudent an example He sets us. The Jews marvelled; but did they believe or obey? Is my belief practical? *S. John ix. 41.*

III. *Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth the law? Ib. 19.*

He touched their consciences, yet they blasphemed. Now He answers not, meekly bearing their insults. Am I shocked at their evil words? Then do I refrain from such thoughts, or, when myself accused, forbear from returning evil for evil? *1 Pet. ii. 20.*

Text.

The Lord is my helper; I will not fear what man shall do unto me. Heb. xiii. 6.

MESSENGERS SENT TO TAKE CHRIST.

Read S. John vii. 32-44.

I. *The Pharisees and the Chief Priests sent officers to take Him. Ib. 32.*

Why? Because the people believed on Him. So the simple-minded and lowly have grace to know Him; the proud and self-righteous seek amiss, and find Him not. (*Ib. 24.*) I will humbly seek Thee, O Lord, and hold fast by Thee. *Ps. lxix. 32.*

II. *If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink. Ib. 37.*

Take this word to thyself. For what do I thirst? The water of life? or earthly pleasures? Nothing is worth longing after but salvation and God. And He will give me abundance. Have I abundance from any other source? *Is. lv. 1.*

III. *Some of them would have taken Him; but no man laid hands on Him. Ib. 44.*

He knew why they came, but He persevered. Would I disarm the evil one? Persevere in the strength of God, and all enemies will vanish. Do I so? or do I yield myself a willing prey to evil? *Heb. x. 38.*

Text.

Let him that is athirst come. Rev. xxii. 17.

Nineteenth Sunday after Trinity.

THE OFFICERS RETURN, PRAISING CHRIST.

Read S. John vii. 45-53

I. *Why have ye not brought Him?* Ib. 45.

How watchful are the Pharisees for the accomplishment of their evil designs! how offended at the temporary failure! Oh, that I were as watchful to perform the will of God—as truly grieved when I fail in it. S. *Luke* xvi. 8.

II. *Never man spake like this Man.* Ib. 46.

But these poor men confess themselves pricked by His words, astonished at His power; and that even to their employers, His persecutors. It would be well if I always spoke, not that which is acceptable, but that which is profitable. *Is.* xxx. 10; l. 4.

III. *Are ye also deceived?* Ib. 47.

Why not have asked, What spake He? They desired not to learn, but to accuse Him, and excuse themselves. So the way to true wisdom, the path of humility, was closed to them. Are my ears open to words of wisdom? Do I desire to know and follow them? 1 *Cor.* i. 18, &c.

Text.

Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. S. *Matt.* v. 3.

For thoughts on the Gospel for the day, see pp. 254, 5.

THE WOMAN TAKEN IN ADULTERY.

Read S. John viii. 1-11.

I. *Moses in the law commanded us that such should be stoned, but what sayest Thou?* Ib. 5.

He, the Judge of all, declined to pass sentence. Do I make Him my pattern in this. He writes only on the earth, where the wind and rain may blot out the record. Oh, that tears could wash away guilt! But He can. S. *Luke vii. 44.*

II. *He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.* Ib. 7.

When almost adjured to decree justly, with what wisdom He makes them responsible who tempted Him, and teaches me to read and know my own sins, and to refrain from condemning my fellow-sinners. *Rom. ii. 1.*

III. *Go, and sin no more.* Ib. 11.

If I look unto myself, I must loathe myself and my own sins, and so learn to hide the sins of others. Then may I hope for the comfort of this poor sinner; absolution in penitence, strength against future temptation. *Is. i. 6, 16, &c.*

Text.

There is mercy with Thee; therefore shalt Thou be feared. Psalm cxxx. 4.

CHRIST TEACHING IN THE TEMPLE.

Read S. John viii. 12-29.

I. *I am the light of the world.* Ib. 12.

Without true light in the soul, who can direct his way? He who follows not Christ must surely err. Do I err? It is because I seek not Thee, my Lord, my Light, my Life; or knowing Thee, do not glorify Thee as God. *Deut.* xxviii. 29.

II. *Ye neither know Me nor My Father.* Ib. 19.

They only knew Him by name and in words—not really—not practically. Christ bids me follow Him. Do I so? In what? or if not, why? Is this truly to know Him? 1 *John* ii. 4.

III. *I go My way, and ye shall seek Me, and shall die in your sins.* Ib. 21.

Must this be? Yes, to those who believe not—who are of this world, and not of Christ—loving earthly things. Am I such? Would I avoid this condemnation? I must follow heavenly and divine things. S. *James* iv. 4; 1 S. *John* ii. 15.

Text.

Men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. S. *John* iii. 19.

AS HE TAUGHT, MANY BELIVEED.

Read Ib. 30-45.

I. *If ye continue in My word, then are ye My disciples indeed. Ib. 31.*

To persevere in the faith and doctrine of the Master is the mark of a good disciple. To seek to know and to love Him, and prove our discipleship by a consistent practice. Do I so? *S. James i. 22-25.*

II. *Whosoever committeth sin, is the servant of sin. Ib. 34.*

They boasted themselves free—so do many; but what was their freedom? From serving God. Alas, this freedom is true slavery. The more I have obeyed, the more this tyrant sin has demanded. Is it not so? *2 Pet. ii. 19.*

III. *If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. Ib. 39.*

The sons of God are not known by profession, but by their fruits. All are not Christ's who are called His. Would I be really His, I must strive to do those things He would have me do. *Rom. ix. 6, 7.*

Text.

If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them. S. John xiii. 17.

THE JEWS DESIRE TO STONE CHRIST.

*Read S. John viii. 46-59.*I. *Which of you convinceth Me of sin?* Ib.

None could convince Him, but we, if we know any thing, are convicted of ourselves. "He who is of God heareth His words," both condemning us and giving us peace and hope in Christ. Have I this knowledge of myself, and peace in Him? *S. John x. 4.*

II. *Say we not well that Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?* Ib. 48.

Thus they reproached Him, but He answered not with reviling. He sought only the glory of God, and both in word and work honoured Him. Do I in any sense do so, and then bear, as He did, reproach and shame? *2 Cor. xi, 20.*

III. *Then they took up stones, &c.* Ib. 59.

So they hated and persecuted Him, worst of all under the pretence of zeal for God. He hid Himself and departed. Do I fear the loss of His presence? Let me avoid misinterpreting, reviling, and injuring others. *1 John iii. 14, 15, 18, &c.*

Text.

It hated Me before it hated you. *S. John xv. 18.*

THE MAN BLIND FROM HIS BIRTH HEALED.

Read S. John ix. 1-12.

I. *Who did sin, this man, or his parents?* Ib. 2.

It is a grievous error to think that the sufferings of others are the special penalties of their sins. Have I uncharitably thought so? All chastisements are for the glory of God, and for our good. *Heb. xii. 10.*

II. *Go, wash in the pool of Siloam.* Ib. 7.

First He anointed his eyes with clay. By such different means to what we expect does God work. Now He orders him to do a public act, and apparently a needless one. All is for my good which He appoints. *Rom. viii. 28.*

III. *I went and washed, and I received sight.* Ib. 11.

Here was the reward of a willing obedience. Here also was a grateful acknowledgment of Him who had restored the sight, the fountain of all good. Do I acknowledge Him and all His benefits? *Ps. xxxvi. 9.*

Text.

The blind receive their sight. S. Matt. xi. 5.

HE CONFESSES HIS CURE, AND IS CAST OUT OF THE
SYNAGOGUE.

Read S. John ix. 13-41.

I. *Give God the praise; we know that this man is a sinner. Ib. 24.*

Under the cloak of serving God, they would deny the Son of God, and have this poor man do the like. But he, taught of God, fearlessly acknowledged Him again. Is such my course among ungodly men? *Ps. cxix. 46.*

II. *Dost thou teach us? And they cast him out. Ib. 34.*

Yes, he was wiser than his teachers. Nevertheless, they cast him out. We must be prepared for this, who desire to follow Christ. Am I content that it should so be with me? *1 Kings xix. 10.*

III. *Lord, I believe; and he worshipped Him. Ib. 38.*

They cast him out; Christ received him. This was consolation enough. To whom else could he go? To whom else can I go? He is all; Him only will I worship. *S. John vi. 67, 68.*

Text.

When my father and my mother forsake me, the Lord taketh me up. Ps. xxvii. 12.

Twentieth Sunday after Trinity.

CHRIST THE WAY, THE TRUTH, THE LIFE.

Read S. John xiv. 1-12.

I. *This is the way, walk ye in it.* Is. xxx. 21.

For there is no other way but by Him. By His merits alone comes salvation. In following His example is alone the path of holiness. Do I strive to walk in this path—believing, hoping, following? S. John x. 1.

II. *Love the truth and peace.* Zech. viii. 19.

It is from not really loving and desiring the truth that so many fall. Would I have peace? Seek the truth. Love it, abide in it; and it shall make me free—from myself, from Satan,—for God. S. John viii. 32, 36.

III. *The life was the light of men.* S. John i. 4.

It is not only the safe, the true, the peaceful way, but the way of light. In Christ is no doubt, no darkness, no falling. All is light and life. No death. Is He my light, by which, in which I strive to walk? Col. iii. 3, 4.

Text.

He that hath the Son hath life. 1 John v. 12.

For thoughts on the Gospel for the day, see p. 395.

CHRIST THE DOOR.

Read S. John x. 1-10.

I. *I am the door of the sheep.* Ib. 7.

'The door is neither wide nor high. They must stoop, and not be puffed up, who would go through the door of the "Lowly." Yet it is wide enough for all. *Ps.* cxxx. 2.

II. *By Me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved.*
Ib. 9.

He humbled Himself, and God exalted Him. If we follow Him, we shall be saved in Him. Going in and out, abiding in Him, yet working with and for Him, He will feed us in holy, heavenly pastures. *Ezek.* xxxiv. 11-16.

III. *I am come that they might have life.* Ib. 10.

He died that we might live; but not only so, but that we might have "more abundant" life,—that we might grow daily more and more. Do I make progress in the Christian life? Do I stand still? Do I go back? 1 *Thess.* iv. 1.

Text.

That believing, ye might have life through His name. S. John xx. 31.

CHRIST THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

*Read S. John x. 11-18.*I. *I am the Good Shepherd.* Ib. 11.

His office it is to keep His sheep from the enemies. Threefold they are,—the world, the flesh, the devil. If I am overcome, it is not His doing, but my own. He will protect and defend me, if I seek Him. 1 Cor. x. 13.

II. *I know My sheep; I lay down My life for the sheep.* Ib. 14, 15.

What marks of a good shepherd! What a solace for His flock! He who knows all things, knows me. To Him I may resign myself. But do I love Him as He has loved me? Ps. cxxxix. 1; xxiii.

III. *My sheep hear My voice, I know them, and they follow Me.* Ib. 27.

And these are the marks of good sheep. Now do I bear them? Do I hearken to His voice contradicting my evil will? Do I follow Him thankfully unto sorrow and sadness? Job xiii. 15; S. Matt. x. 16.

Text.

He shall feed His flock like a shepherd.

He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom; and shall gently lead those that are with young. Is. xl. 11.

CHRIST THE TRUE VINE.

Read S. John xv. 1-8.

I. *I am the true Vine.* Ib. 1.

In Him we live, move, and have our being. He is our head, our root, our stock, our life, our all. Lord, art Thou all this to me? Make me abide in Thee; for without Thee I can do nothing; with Thee, all things. *Col.* i. 17.

II. *My Father is the Husbandman.* Ib.

God the eternal, the all-seeing, the omniscient; who purges the fruitful, casts forth the barren. Do I so think of God? Do I remember that His eye, His hand are upon me? What effect does this work in me? *Ps.* xciv. 9, 10.

III. *I am the Vine, ye are the branches.* Ib. 5.

Are we indeed branches in Him? Is He our support, our strength? What, then, is our calling? That we bear much fruit. That we abide in Him. Do I thus glorify the Father? Do I thus live in Him? Am I thus fruitful? *S. Matt.* xiii. 23.

Text.

Thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. If the root be holy, so are the branches. *Rom.* xi. 18, 16.

For other titles and figures of Christ, see pp. 405-412.

THE MISSION OF THE SEVENTY.

Read S. Luke x. 1-16.

I. *The Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two by two before His face. Ib.*

Whither? To the harvest of souls, where but few laboured. In this work none may be idle, nor walk otherwise than before His face,—as in His presence. Do I labour for Him in my sphere? Who cannot influence some one for good? *S. John ii. 5; 2 Kings v. 3.*

II. *I send you forth as lambs among wolves. Ib. 3.*

Not to pleasant pastures, but to scenes of trial and probation. Difficulty of some kind is before us all. Am I ready and willing for it,—resting in the hope of future glory? *S. Matt. x. 16-22.*

III. *He that heareth you, heareth Me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth Me. Ib. 16.*

Those who are sent of God have His authority. They are His ambassadors. We may not safely neglect them. Obedience would be a less trial to us if we saw in them, not man, but God in man, speaking. *S. John xx. 21.*

Text.

Obey them that have the rule over you; . . for they watch for your souls. Heb. xiii. 17.

THE SEVENTY RETURN FROM THEIR MISSION.

Read S. Luke x. 17-24.

I. *Even the devils are subject unto us, through Thy name. Ib.*

They confessed the name of the Lord, yet they mentioned "with joy" the subjection to themselves. Even in spiritual things there is danger in this. Self-complacency is a serious evil. Do I indulge it? To God be all glory, when we overcome the evil one, in Him. *Ps. cxv. 1.*

II. *I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. Ib. 18.*

Pride and vanity caused his fall. This was their warning, and is ours. No fall is more sudden than that which follows pride. Need I not beware? *Prov. xvi. 18.*

III. *Rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven. Ib. 20.*

Many gifts are bestowed, even upon the reprobate, for the common good of all. These may, these will be lost in that great day. (*Eph. iv. 7, &c.*) The only source of true joy is the hope of an inheritance in heaven. Where is my treasure? Where my hopes? Where my joy? *1 Pet. i. 3-5.*

Text.

Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall. 1 Cor. x. 12.

THE LAWYER'S QUESTION, AND CHRIST'S ANSWER.

Read S. Luke x. 25-28.

I. *Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?* Ib. 25.

A practical question, though asked of Christ, tempting Him. Not in a bare profession, but in the doing of the will of God, is the way to life eternal. Do I ever ask such questions in real earnest? S. John xiii. 17.

II. *What is written in the law?* Ib. 26.

Here in the word of God is to be found the rule of a holy, heavenly life. Do I walk according to this? If not, how can I pretend really to desire that eternal life? Gal. vi. 16.

III. *Do this, and thou shalt live.* Ib. 28.

This, namely, the love of God, in heart and soul, the love of my neighbour as myself, is this my rule? Have I no greater love of myself, of vanities, of sin? Is. i. 16, 17.

Text.

There is one God . . . and to love Him with all the heart . . . and to love his neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices. S. Mark xii. 33.

Twenty-first Sunday after Trinity.

THE GOOD SAMARITAN.

Read S. Luke x. 29-37.

I. *A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves.* Ib. 30.

He left Jerusalem, the city of peace. No wonder that he fell into trouble; no wonder that I, when I leave God for the world, fall into the power of the evil one and my own evil passions. These rob me of present peace and future hopes. *Phil. iii. 18, 19.*

II. *When he [a certain Samaritan] saw him, he had compassion on him.* Ib. 33.

Others passed by; Christ the merciful and good alone takes pity, binds up the contrite heart, gives the grace of His Holy Spirit, places us in His house—at His table; cares for us. Do I really love Him for all this, and know my own misery and need? *Is. lxi. 1-3.*

III. *Go, and do thou likewise.* Ib. 37.

What love He has shewn to me I am bound to shew to others—to lead them to Him, to love them for His sake, to do them good. Lord, fill me with love like Thine. 1 *S. John* iv. 10, 11.

Text.

He forgiveth all thy sin, and healeth all thine infirmities. Ps. ciii. 3.

For thoughts on the Gospel for the day, see p. 245.

CHRIST ENTERTAINED BY MARTHA.

Read S. Luke x. 38-42.

I. *A certain woman, named Martha, received Him into her house. Ib. 38.*

She feared not the Jews, who sought His death. But how often do I refuse Him service, seeking to please men rather than God; fearing danger where no real danger is! *Ps. liii. 5; S. Matt. x. 28.*

II. *Mary . . . sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word. Ib. 39.*

She sat—in spiritual quiet and attention—at His feet; in humility, hearing; in readiness to obey. Have I these three marks of discipleship in me? *Ps. cxix. 103.*

III. *Martha was cumbered about much serving. Ib. 40.*

We often cumber ourselves with doing more than we need, taking up the duties of others. In the Christian body all have their offices. Let each mind their own. (1 Cor. xii.) In overmuch business is much distraction, little reflection; yet diligence is a duty in what belongs to us. *S. Matt. xiii. 22.*

Text.

Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. Rom. xii. 11.

MARTHA'S COMPLAINT OF MARY, AND REPROOF.

Read again S. Luke x. 38-42.

I. *Lord, dost Thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone?* Ib. 40.

Why complain of her Lord? Why of her sister? Did not He tread the wine-press alone? Was not she under His guidance? Do I complain of others? Complain of thyself. Leave them to Him. *Is. lxiii. 3; Rom. xiv. 4.*

II. *Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things.* Ib. 41.

She was, indeed, serving the Lord; but a troubled mind has no place for reflection. We should think beforehand, see what is right, then act without disturbance. *S. Luke xxiv. 37, &c.*

III. *But one thing is needful.* Ib. 42.

A little will suffice—some have understood these words so; very little for the body, reflection for the mind. At least this latter is needful food for the soul. Which do I count most needful? For which do I strive? Is Christ my desire? *S. Matt. vi. 25, 26.*

Text.

Be careful for nothing, . . . and the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Phil. iv. 6, 7.

CHRIST REBUKES THE HYPOCRISY OF THE PHARISEE.

*Read S. Luke xi. 37-54.*I. *He marvelled that he had not first washed.* Ib. 38.

The Lord of all was his guest. Surely it would be better to have remained certain that He did only what was good. Would it not be well to interpret favorably all the acts of others? Who has revealed to me what God only knows—their hearts? 1 Cor. xiii. 7.

II. *Ye make clean the outside.* Ib. 39.

In this is there no blame; but their “inward part was full of ravening and wickedness.” It will not do to care for the outside, and neglect the inward part. For which do I care most? Ps. li. 6.

III. *Did not He that made that which is without, make that which is within also?* Ib. 40.

He is not, then, content with outward forms, but esteems the inward the greater. Our best actions are evil unless they are from within. All should come of a pure heart, a good conscience, and faith unfeigned. 1 Tim. i. 5.

Text.

My son, give Me thy heart. Prov. xxiii. 26.

CHRIST WOULD NOT DECIDE THE DISPUTE OF TWO
BRETHREN.

Read S. Luke xii. 13-15.

- I. *Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me.* Ib. 13.

Here is the proof of a worldly mind breaking charity for the sake of earthly things. They who come to Jesus, must come with heavenly, not earthly desires. When I pray, what do I think of? What do I desire? S. *Matt.* vi. 21, 33.

- II. *Who made Me a judge or a divider?* Ib. 14.

There is neither duty nor charity in meddling with what is not our vocation. Christ sets us the example. His object was to lead men to God, not to fix them here below. So may I prove myself. 2 *Tim.* ii. 4.

- III. *Beware of covetousness.* Ib. 15.

Life consists not in the abundance of that we possess. Yet how differently men think who esteem it the happiest state! Why is it not? Ask thyself, Does it lead me to or from God? Which is the true freedom? *Ps.* cxliv. 15.

Text.

Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. Col. iii. 2.

THE RICH MISER.

Read S. Luke xii. 16-21.

I. *The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully. Ib. 16.*

He had no friends to advise with, no place to bestow his fruits; full of anxiety and toil; pulling down to build up; forgetful of God, and thankless. See the snares of wealth! Is this what I desire? *Prov. xxx. 8.*

II. *Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, &c. Ib. 19.*

To him the source of ruin was a chief good. The uncertainty of life was forgotten. He expected ease and happiness, yet in all was deceived. Do I practically act as he did? 1 *Tim. vi. 10.*

III. *Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee. Ib. 20.*

Then all will be over—all gone; nothing to go with me. Not earthly treasures; they are for others—for whom I know not! Not heavenly; for I have sought none—found none! Oh, that I may yet be rich with God! *Rev. iii. 17.*

Text.

Blessed be ye poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. S. Luke vi. 20.

WAITING FOR THE COMING OF THE LORD.

Read S. Luke xii. 35-48. (Matt. xxiv. ; Mark xiii.)

I. *Let your loins be girded about.* Ib.

The denial of our appetites, which lead us to earth, and impede the soul; a watchful spirit—expectation of the Lord's being at hand;—these are most needful dispositions. Are mine such? *Phil.* iv. 5.

II. *That when He cometh and knocketh, they may open unto Him immediately.* Ib. 36.

They who watch are not startled when the knock is heard. Their lamps are ready. They wait for and rejoice at His appearing. *Rev.* iii. 3, 20; *S. Matt.* xxv. 4, 8.

III. *If (he) had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched.* Ib. 39.

We must watch at all hours, for we are certain of none. He will come as by stealth (2 *Pet.* iii. 10). He, the Judge of all, stands before the door (*S. James* v. 9). Am I prepared for Him?

Text.

Unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation. Heb. ix. 28.

Twenty-second Sunday after Trinity.

PARABLE OF THE BARREN FIG-TREE.

Read S. Luke xiii. 6-9.

I. *He came and sought fruit thereon, and found none.*
Ib.

God expects fruit of each of us, according to our several vocations. Not otherwise. Have I borne such fruit, or only a semblance of it? Have I indeed sent my Lord away empty? *Rom. xii. 6-8.*

II. *Cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?* Ib. 7.

This sentence was for three years only of unfruitfulness. Yet with me it has been too much the condition of a whole life. What patience He has shewn! What perverseness have I! *Is. v. 4-7.*

III. *Let it alone this year also.* Ib. 8.

Such is the continual plea of our great Intercessor, and, in His name, of His people who love one another. "Have patience, O God! yet a while: while a little more admonition, humiliation," &c., &c. Will I yield myself to these? *Ps. cvi. 23.*

Text.

Every branch in me that beareth not fruit He taketh away. S. John xv. 2.

For thoughts on the Gospel for the day, see pp. 335, 6.

THE WOMAN BOWED DOWN IS HEALED.

Read S. Luke xiii. 10-17.

I. *A woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years. Ib. 11.*

A type of those who cleave to earthly things (*Ps. cxix. 25*); or worse, whose minds are bent on evil ways. (*Ps. xvii. 11.*) From such a state deliver me, O God! Prove me!

II. *Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity. Ib. 12.*

Before we ask, He knows our wants, and has compassion. Have I looked for His mercy? Has it not been vouchsafed even before I sought it? (*Is. lxxv. 24.*) One touch from Him is the cure of all. How often, alas, have I shrunk from it!

III. *The ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the Sabbath day. Ib. 14.*

Oh, the perverseness and hypocrisy of men! Under cover of regard to the Sabbath, he hid his envy of the glory of Christ. Do I let my inward faults appear as outward virtues? I am, then, but as he. The Lord pardon and cleanse me. 1 *Pet. ii. 16.*

Text.

He touched me, and set me upright. Dan. viii. 18.

THE HYPOCRITICAL ADVICE OF THE PHARISEES.

*Read S. Luke xiii. 31-35.*I. *Depart hence ; for Herod will kill Thee.* Ib. 31.

They really desired Him to be gone, whose glory and praise in the eyes of men wounded them. Sometimes it is needful even to leave a good work when it stirs up the ill-will of others. If such a trial were mine, should I submit? *S. John iv. 37, 38.*

II. *Tell that fox ; Behold, I cast out devils.* Ib. 32.

For this, and for the healing of all sicknesses He came. And He persevered in well-doing. To follow our vocation in humility and constancy is a wise and safe path. Do I follow it without fear? *Heb. xiii. 6.*

III. *I must walk to-day and to-morrow, and the day following.* Ib. 33.

Whatever may happen, He must do His Father's will. What courage and constancy! If difficulties beset me, what is my course? Do I shrink, or do I persevere? *Heb. xii. 4.*

Text.

He that shall endure to the end, the same shall be saved. *S. Matt. xxiv. 13.*

THE MAN WITH THE DROPSY HEALED.

Read S. Luke xiv. 1-6.

I. *As He went into the house . . to eat bread . . they watched Him.* Ib. 1.

He went there and became their guest, though He knew their spirit. He did so for their good; always patient, forbearing, for the good of souls. Do I avoid labouring for the good of such? 1 Cor. xiii. 7.

II. *There was a certain man before Him which had the dropsy.* Ib. 2.

Type of the spirit of concupiscence, which grows with indulgence, till it enslaves and destroys the man. Happy they who are not under its dominion. Am I, or do I restrain it? Ps. xix. 13.

III. *He took him and healed him, and let him go.* Ib. 4.

He asked, "Is it lawful?" and received no answer. He replies Himself by this act of mercy. He calls and makes poor sinners His own, and then heals them. Take me for Thine own, O Lord! 1 Cor. x. 31, 32; *ib.* iii. 21, 23.

Text.

Be ready always to give an answer to every man . . of the hope that is in you. 1 Pet. iii. 15.

AMBITION OF THE PHARISEES REPROVED.

Read S. Luke xiv. 7-11.

I. *When thou art bidden of any . . sit not down in the highest room. Ib. 8.*

For Christ sat in the lowest, and whoso places himself before the meanest of his brethren, places himself before Christ (*Ps. xxii. 6*). And even for our own sake, before men, it is not well. *Prov. xxv. 6, 7.*

II. *But . . go and sit down in the lowest room. Ib. 10.*

For there shall we be nearest to our Lord. Would I be near Him, I must place myself below all, for there He placed Himself. *S. John xiii. 14, 15.*

III. *Whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted. Ib. 11.*

In the kingdom of God it is far different from what we would have it. That which is first with us is last with Him. That which I too often despise is highly exalted of Him. Would I be exalted with Christ, I must now be abased with Him. *S. John i. 15; Is. lxvi. 2.*

Text.

In honour preferring one another. Rom. xii. 10.

THE PARABLE OF THE LOST SHEEP.

Read S. Luke xv. 1-10.

I. *This Man receiveth sinners.* Ib. 2.

Such was the complaint of the Pharisees. How opposed this spirit to the spirit of Christ! Which dwells in me? Where should I be, if He did not receive sinners? 1 Cor. ix. 22.

II. *What man of you having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not . . go after that? &c.* Ib. 4.

“All we (yea, I also) like sheep have gone astray.” But He hath sought me, borne me, cherished me, received me again. Acknowledge, then, His mercy and love. Seek Him who hath sought thee. Ps. cxix. 176.

III. *Rejoice with Me; for I have found My sheep, which was lost.* Ib. 6.

Surely I ought to call together all creation, to rejoice with me who have been found, and received a new life of Him. If God indeed rejoices, and the holy angels with Him, let me seek to increase that joy by true repentance, following Him. Ps. lxvi. 16

Text.

I, even I, will both search my sheep and seek them out. Ezek. xxxiv. 11.

THE PRODIGAL SON.

Read S. Luke xv. 11-16.

I. *A certain man had two sons . . and he divided unto them his living. Ib. 11, 12.*

To each God has given their talents of nature and of grace to spend in His service. What has He entrusted to me? and for what purpose? *Eph. iv. 7.*

II. *Not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey. Ib. 13.*

It is but a short time that men refrain from sin; far from their Father and their God, they live in sin and forgetfulness of Him. How has this been with me? What has been my youth? What my riper years? *Ps. xxv. 7.*

III. *And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine, &c. Ib. 14.*

Famine and want there is, indeed, where God is not. Ever trying to satisfy, never satisfied with the pleasures of sin. (*Prov. xxx. 15.*) Oh, the misery of a life without God in the world! The misery of ever desiring, never filled! From what, oh, from what have I fallen! *Amos viii. 11.*

Text.

Thy children have forsaken Me, and sworn by them that are no gods. Jer. v. 7.

Twenty-third Sunday after Trinity.

THE PRODIGAL REPENTING.

Read S. Luke xv. 17-20.

I. *And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!* Ib. 17.

The first step to penitence is a sense of misery and want. Even for those who are walking in the right way, the first step to progress is a sense of deficiency. S. Matt. v. 6.

II. *I will arise and go to my father.* Ib. 18.

Then came the thought of home, the remembrance of a father's love, the resolution to arise and seek him once more. Have I had such thoughts? Have I acted on them? Mere wishes are mostly ineffectual. Is. lxiv. 6-8.

III. *I am no more worthy to be called thy son.* Ib. 19.

Then came the consciousness of lost privileges, the conviction and confession of sin, the defilement of his state. And he arose and came to his father. Oh, that now I came in such a spirit to my Father who is in heaven. Jer. iii. 22.

Text.

Thou art my Father, my God. Ps. lxxxix. 26.

For thoughts on the Gospel for the day, see p. 397.

THE PRODIGAL RECEIVED BY HIS FATHER.

Read S. Luke xv. 20-32.

I. *When he was yet a great way off his father saw him, and had compassion.* Ib. 20.

He did not upbraid him with his faults, but freely received and loved him. What love ought we to feel for Him who so loveth us! How anxious to strive to sin no more! *Jer. xxxi. 34.* (Compare *Ephes. ii.*)

II. *Bring forth the best robe . . . Bring hither the fatted calf.* Ib. 22, 23.

The robe of justification. The ring, the seal of adoption. Shoes to strengthen his feet in the right way. The fatted calf, type of the Crucified, and of the spiritual food of the altar. What gifts! what love! *Zech. iii. 4, 5.*

III. *Son, thou art ever with me, &c.* Ib. 31.

This is the portion of the just; yet so boundless is the love of God to penitents, that it is even envied, if it can be, by His children. Blame not them, but seek to be filled with such love thyself, and give thanks for thy blessed portion, O my soul. *Ps. xvi. 5-11.*

Text.

Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost. S. Luke xv. 6.

THE UNJUST STEWARD.

Read S. Luke xvi. 1-12.

I. *Give an account of thy stewardship.* Ib. 2.

To such an hour we must all come. All we have is of God. We hold all from Him, not for ourselves, but as stewards. What have I received? How have I used it? What will my account be? 1 *Chron.* xxix. 12; *S. Matt.* xxv. 19.

II. *What shall I do?* Ib. 3.

Well were it if we asked this important question in time. Oh, that I might think seriously how have I dealt with my senses, my understanding, my affections, my passions! By and by it may be too late. *Rev.* vi. 16, 17.

III. *The children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.* Ib. 8.

The Lord commended not his acts, but his prudent forethought.—And all this contrivance for earthly gain! Why are not my forethought, labours, watchings, care, as great for heavenly gain? Are they so or no? 1 *Cor.* ix. 25.

Text.

We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one receive the things done in his body. 2 *Cor.* v. 10.

THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS.

Read S. Luke xvi. 19-31.

I. *There was a certain rich man, &c. . . and a certain beggar named Lazarus. Ib. 19, 20.*

The one fared sumptuously, the other lived in misery and want. Which state do men mostly prefer? Which do I? Which does sense desire? Is it right? Which leads towards heaven? *Ps. xlix. 16-19.*

II. *The beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. Ib. 22.*

Think of the end of this humble, despised, and suffering man. How light his trials in comparison of his joys! Have I trial and sorrow? Weigh them in this balance, they will be light. *2 Cor. iv. 17.*

III. *The rich man also died, and was buried; and in hell he lifted up his eyes. Ib. 22, 23.*

Here is the end of a sensual life. A short-lived happiness, if even that. What a state that followed! If such an end follows self-indulgence, how can I, how do I, endeavour to mortify and restrain all needless desires. *Job xxi. 13.*

Text.

Blessed be ye poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. S. Luke vi. 20.

THE TORMENTS OF THE RICH MAN.

Read S. Luke xvi. 23-31.

I. *He seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. Ib. 23.*

Lazarus, whom he had despised and neglected. So changed is the order of things. Now he prays for mercy and relief, but it is too late. What I would reap in eternity, I must sow here. *Gal. vi. 7, 8.*

II. *Thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things. Ib. 25.*

These so-called good things were only the desire of the eye and the flesh. With these he had filled himself. Lazarus had been destitute of all,—a beggar, despised, full of sores. Oh, learn hence, what to indulge, what to deny. *2 Thess. ii. 6, 7; Prov. xiii. 7.*

III. *They have Moses and the prophets. Ib. 29.*

Expect no miraculous instruction. Use the instructions thou hast. They are sufficient; hear them; use them. Have I done so? *Rom. i. 19-21.* Yet I have more than they, One from the dead—JESUS.

Text.

How hardly shall a rich man enter into the kingdom of heaven! S. Matt. xix. 23.

THE UNJUST JUDGE AND THE WIDOW.

Read S. Luke xviii. 1-8.

I. *Men ought always to pray, and not to faint.* Ib.

For all times and places are open to temptation. Against this, prayer is the only remedy. Are the world, the flesh, and the devil, really around and near me? Do I take this shield against them? It is my only safety. *Eph. vi. 11, 12, and 18.*

II. *Avenge me of mine adversary. And he would not for a while.* Ib. 3, 4.

Yet she continued to approach and supplicate him who, though evil, was her appointed judge. Even our heavenly Father answers not for a while, that we also may continue to entreat Him. Do I act on this in temptation? *Ps. xxviii. 1, 2, and 7.*

III. *I will avenge her, lest by continual coming she weary me.* Ib. 5.

And God in mercy says, "Shall not God avenge His own elect, who cry day and night to Him?" If I reap not this, it is a proof that I have not prayed to Him fervently or perseveringly. Perhaps I secretly desire to cherish my foe? *S. James iv. 2, 3.*

Text.

In due season we shall reap if we faint not.
Gal. vi. 9.

THE PHARISEE AND PUBLICAN.

Read S. Luke xviii. 9-14.

I. *The Pharisee stood and prayed.* Ib. 11.

An unhumbled posture of body and of spirit,—self-satisfied (*S. Luke* xvii. 10), and therefore condemning others, and that unjustly,—a sure consequence. Do I condemn his conduct? Am I free from his spirit?

II. *The Publican standing afar off.* Ib. 13.

He stood also; yet here were contrition, humility, reverence, self-condemnation, trust in the mercy of God. Such are conditions of acceptable prayer. Is my heart in such a condition? Then surely shall I be heard and pardoned. *S. Matt.* viii. 8.

III. *This man went down to his house justified, rather than the other.* Ib. 14.

Such is the sentence of God. More pleasing to God is humility with penitence, than pride with morality. So hateful to Him is pride in a creature. Abase thyself, my soul; confess thy sins; cry for mercy. So shall I be at peace with myself and with God. *Dan.* ix. 20.

Text.

The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart. *Ps.* xxxiv. 18.

Twenty-fourth Sunday after Trinity.

THE SPIRIT OF LITTLE CHILDREN THE SPIRIT OF THE
KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

Read S. Luke xviii. 15-17. (S. Matt. xviii.; S.
Mark x.)

I. *They brought unto Him also infants.* Ib. 15.

Early knowledge of Christ is the greatest blessing. Was I early brought to Him? Did I receive Thy instructions gladly, and use them aright? How much depends on childhood, who can say? 2 *Tim.* i. 5; *Prov.* xxii. 6.

II. *When His disciples saw it, they rebuked them. But Jesus called them.* Ib. 15, 16.

For He loves the innocence of little ones. Then strive to lead them to Him. Have I children, or any little ones who love me, whom I may lead? Do I lead them to Him? *Deut.* vi. 7; *Psa.* xxxiv. 11.

III. *Of such is the kingdom of God.* Ib. 16.

Not only of these, who by their infancy cannot sin, but of "such" who by grace do not. The humble, the meek, the gentle, the teachable, the obedient. Am I such? 1 *Cor.* xiv. 20 (1 *John* iii. 9).

Text.

As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word. 1 *Pet.* ii. 2.

For thoughts on the Gospel for the day, see p. 258.

THE RICH YOUNG MAN INQUIRING.

Read S. Matt. xix. 16-19. (Ib. ib.)

I. *What good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?* Ib. 16.

How earnest an inquiry! Compare with it thy own desires for eternal life, which is not to gained by profession, but by trial, heartily serving God. S. Matt. vii. 21.

II. *Keep the commandments.* Ib. 17.

Though Christ has purchased by His merits eternal life, it is to be found only in the way He has taught—in the belief, and love, and following of Him—in the keeping of His Father's law. 1 John ii. 4.

III. *All these things have I kept from my youth up.* Ib. 26.

Happy any who can with truth say so. If others haply can do so, how can I? If only it were true from our first reception of Christ that we had been faithful to our profession, it would be well. But how far am I from such a state? Ps. xxv. 7.

Text.

This is love, that we walk after His commandments. 2 John 6.

HE IS TOLD HOW TO BE PERFECT.

Read S. Matt. xix. 20-26. (Ib. ib.)

I. *If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast and give to the poor. Ib. 21.*

It is said (*S. Mark*) that Jesus "loved" him ; and thus He shewed His love, teaching him a more perfect way and a higher reward. Is this what I desire ? Is it what I really follow ? 1 *Cor. xii. 31, and xiii. 13.*

II. *He went away sorrowful. Ib. 22.*

"When he heard that," "for he had great possessions." So the love of this world tore him away from Christ. Poverty, when we are called thereto, is a blessing ; and then willingly to resign riches is a positive duty. *S. James ii. 5.*

III. *A rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. Ib. 23.*

If so, a poorer lot must be among the helps on the way thither. Have I much ? Am I aware of my dangers ? Have I little ? Am I thankful for my lot, and give up myself also to God ? 1 *Tim. vi. 17 ; ib. 6-8.*

Text.

There is a sore evil which I have seen under the sun, namely, riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt. Eccles. v. 13.

LEAVING ALL TO FOLLOW CHRIST.

Read S. Matt. xix. 27-30. (S. Mark x.)

I. *We have forsaken all and followed Thee.* Ib. 27.

“What shall we have?” Peter’s desire was to the reward which Christ promised His faithful ones. Do I desire to share it with him? Have I renounced the world, the flesh, the devil, self? Have I followed Christ? 1 *Thess.* i. 6.

II. *Ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones.* Ib. 28.

Ye “who have followed Me.” So the choice is before us: contempt of the world, with Christ; or glory, honour, pleasure, and the loss of Him. Which do I choose? *Cant.* i. 4.

III. *Every one that hath forsaken houses, &c., shall receive an hundredfold.* Ib. 29.

Even here, the contented enjoyment of all God’s gifts, and the certainty of eternal joy. Why, then, be doubtful? why sad? why cast down in trouble? (*Phil.* iii. 8, 9.) Is it not that we have not emptied ourselves?

Text.

Whosoever he be that forsaketh not all that he hath, cannot be My disciple. S. Luke xiv. 33.

THE LABOURERS IN THE VINEYARD.

Read S. Matt. xx. 1-16.

I. *The kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder. Ib. 1.*

Into his vineyard, at various hours, he hired labourers. I am one of such. At whatever time I was called, the time that remains is mine to use or to abuse; yet it is His. Have I thought of this as I ought? *Rom. xiv. 8; 1 Pet. iv. 3.*

II. *When even was come, &c. (he saith :) Ib. 8.*

Call "the labourers," not the idle, and give them their hire. Think often of that solemn evening hour. It must come. All were paid alike; God regards more the fervour than the length of our service. What have my years been? *Heb. ix. 27.*

III. *And when they had received it, they murmured. Ib. 11.*

This is too often the spirit of those who have long professed a religious life. To think much of themselves, little of others who have not. Yet these may be more earnest than they. (*S. Matt. vi. 7.*) Do I compare myself so with others? *Phil. ii. 3.*

Text.

He hath mercy on whom He will have mercy.
Rom. ix. 18.

LAZARUS SICK.

Read S. John xi. 1-16.

- I. *His sisters sent unto [Jesus], saying, Lord, behold, he whom Thou lovest is sick. Ib. 3.*

They go at once to the true Physician, pleading neither their own nor their brother's merits or affection, but only Jesus's love. He reminds them that this, as every trial, is for the glory of God. So may I seek Him; so receive His will. *S. John ix. 3; xxi. 19.*

- II. *Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. Ib. 5.*

And how did He shew His love? Not by hasting to their request, but working His purpose in and by them. Such ought to be my desire. Is it so? If it is, it is the secret of patience and resignation. *Heb. xii. 6.*

- III. *Lazarus is dead; and I am glad for your sakes that I was not there. Ib. 14, 15.*

So He taught them that their seeming trial was for their own real good, to strengthen faith and increase obedience. And then He adds, "Let us go to him." Here is the true consolation, "I will be with him in trouble." *Ps. xci. 15.*

Text.

No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness. Heb. xii. 11.

JESUS AT BETHANY.

Read S. John xi. 16-32.

I. *When Jesus came, He found that he had lain in the grave four days.* Ib. 17.

Oftentimes God allows our case to be a very desperate one, both to stir up our industry and to promote His glory. Work, then, as if thou hadst no help. Trust in Him as if thou hadst no strength. *Phil. ii. 12, 13.*

II. *Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.* Ib. 21.

Ah! But they knew not this. All was according to His will and for His glory. We ought in every thing to submit to the Divine will. Then can no harm happen to us. *1 Pet. iv. 19.*

III. *The Master is come, and calleth for thee.* Ib. 28.

How faithful in Martha to seek to lead her sister to act upon their Master's call! What readiness in Mary to obey! Weigh these two things, and see am I such? *1 Sam. iii. 10.*

Text.

A very present help in trouble; therefore will not we fear. Ps. xlv. 1, 2.

Twenty-fifth Sunday after Trinity.

LAZARUS RAISED FROM THE DEAD.

Read S. John xi. 33-46.

I. *Behold how He loved him !* Ib. 36.

Well might they say so, when "JESUS WEPT" with sympathy for the mourners ; yet how much greater love has He shewed to me ! His life, His blood, Himself,—all given for me ! Do I comprehend, do I return His love ? S. John xv. 9 ; xiv. 15.

II. *Take ye away the stone.* Ib. 39.

All this was a type of our spiritual rising from sin. He could with a miracle remove all obstacles ; but He bids me make the effort. It may be that the soul is very foul, still it must be laid bare. Lord, help me in Thy love. 2 Tim. ii. 21.

III. *Lazarus, come forth.* Ib. 43.

They obeyed. Then He helped them more. And for my spiritual rising there must be the lifting up of the heart, the earnest cries of prayer ; and though I be tied and bound with the chains of my sins, God will help me and loose me. Rom. vii. 18-25 ; viii. 26.

Text.

Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. Eph. v. 14.

For thoughts on the Gospel for the day, see p. 313 ; or in some years the Gospel is one of those after Epiphany.

THE MOTHER OF ZEBEDEE'S CHILDREN.

Read S. Matt. xx. 20-33. (S. Mark x.)

I. *Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on Thy right hand, the other, &c.* Ib. 21.

“Ye know not what ye ask.” They were striving for a kingdom when Christ was preparing for a cross. In the school of humility they were learning ambition. The kingdom of God is not to be found thus. How do I seek it? *Rom.* xiv. 17.

II. *Are ye able to drink of the cup, &c.* Ib. 22.

This is the way and the only way—the following of Jesus. Is it a hard saying? Christ has trod it before me. If I can labour for earthly things, surely in His strength I may gird myself up to follow Him in heavenly things. *Ps.* cx. 7.

III. *To sit on My right hand and on My left, is not Mine to give.* Ib. 23.

Even Christ would not dispose, of His own pleasure, of the kingdom which was prepared of God for those that love Him. He was then living, afterwards dying to purchase it. Now He prepares it for us. Am I seeking it in earnest? *S. John* xiv. 1-21.

Text.

Seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not. Jer. xlv. 5.

BLIND BARTIMÆUS.

Read S. Mark x. 46-52. (S. Matt. xx., S. Luke xviii.)

I. *Sat by the highway side begging.* Ib. 46.

A type of men blind to divine truth, sitting still in uselessness, in the highway of the world, not in the narrow way, seeking a miserable enjoyment from every passing event, and not in God. Am I such? *Rev.* iii. 17.

II. *When he heard that it was Jesus . . . he began to cry out.* Ib. 47.

This is what I must do; take the first opportunity, lest I have no other. Persevere, notwithstanding the opinions of men, in the warfare within. Cast off all evil habits, and cast thyself on Jesus. *Gen.* xxxii. 26.

III. *Jesus answered . . . What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?* Ib. 51.

Oh, the goodness of God, who desires to supply our need! Would that I might answer Him with St. Paul, "Lord, what wouldst Thou have me to do?" At least teach me to know Thy will. *Ps.* cxliii. 8.

Text.

Look, ye blind, that ye may see. Is. xlii. 18.

ZACCHÆUS DESIRES TO SEE CHRIST.

*Read S. Luke xix. 1-4.*I. *He sought to see Jesus who He was. Ib. 2.*

A rich man moved of the Spirit of God to seek heavenly things. He not only desired, but sought. Have I a sufficiency of earthly possessions? Still let me above all seek Him. *S. Matt. xix. 26.*

II. *He could not for the press, because he was little of stature. Ib. 3.*

Here are two impediments to the knowledge of Christ. The crowd of evil in the world and passions within: and 2, our own weakness and incapacity to overcome them. To see this clearly is my first step. *S. Matt. xvii. 20, 21.*

III. *And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore-tree. Ib. 4.*

Here are the ways of gaining that knowledge and activity, engaging the mind beforehand with good thoughts, being there where Christ is likely to be, rising above the world, and striving heavenward. Am I in these ways? *Ps. lxxxv. 13.*

Text.

Thy face, Lord, will I seek. Ps. xxvii. 8.

ZACCHÆUS ENTERTAINS CHRIST.

*Read ib. 4-10.*I. *To-day I must abide at thy house.* Ib. 5.

Our Lord chose that dwelling where was a heart full of desire and affection towards Him. Would I secure Him I must long for Him. Our knowledge and actions must be imperfect; but our desires may go forth to Him. *Rev. iii. 20.*

II. *The half of my goods I give to the poor.* Ib. 8.

Not boasting, we may believe, but to prove the love he had to Him who loveth mercy and justice, whose the poor and oppressed are. Have I such fruits of love? *S. Luke xxiv. 29.*

III. *This day is salvation come to this house.* Ib. 9.

Where ruin and loss is, it is our own doing. (*Hosea xiii. 9.*) Where salvation is, it is the free gift of God. First, we must go forth from ourselves; then, seek Him; and He, bringing salvation, will come to us. Give it me, O Lord!

Text.

If a man love Me, he will keep My words and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him. *S. John xiv. 23.*

PARABLE OF THE GRAIN OF WHEAT.

Read S. John xii. 23-26.

I. *If it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.* Ib. 24.

Christ is that grain of wheat. He died for us, and shall see the travail of His soul and the fruit of it. But we are such grains also in His Church; and we must crucify ourselves and die to Him. *Is. xlviii. 10.*

II. *He that loveth his life shall lose it, and he that hateth his life in this world.* Ib. 25.

“He shall keep it unto life eternal.” Here are two broad ways—love and hatred of self and of the flesh. The choice is plain. Which have I chosen? Which do I prefer? Which will I follow? *Deut. xxx. 15.*

III. *If any man serve Me, let him follow Me.* Ib. 26.

And once more the blessed promise is, “Where I am, there shall My servant be.” But we must follow Him, or we cannot attain this reward. Self-denial, earnestness, a willing service. Is this my condition? *Rom. ii. 6-10.*

Text.

God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. 1 S. John v. 11.

CHRIST TO BE EXALTED ON THE CROSS.

Read S. John xii. 27-43.

I. *I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me. Ib. 32.*

His exaltation and glory were connected with His cross and shame. If we seek it through the praise of men, and boast of self, we are enemies of Christ, and must miss His reward. Let us beware. *Gal. vi. 14.*

II. *Who is this Son of man? Ib. 34.*

The multitude could not understand such doctrines, and they acknowledged Him not. I do so in words; but how are my actions? Well might my Lord complain and warn me. *S. John i. 26.*

III. *Though He had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on Him. Ib. 37.*

When the heart is hard, nothing convinces. When the head is convinced, still the life often shews that the affections are not with God. Even where they are, fear and shame keep us too often from confession. How does this apply to me? *S. John v. 44.*

Text.

To them that perish foolishness, but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. 1 Cor. i. 18.

Twenty-sixth Sunday after Trinity.

EACH WILL BE JUDGED ACCORDING TO HIS LIGHT.

Read S. John xii. 44-50.

I. *I am come a light into the world.* Ib. 46.

Where all sat in the darkness of ignorance, of evil, of death. They that follow Christ alone see the true light. We too often prefer and choose darkness. Do I really desire and seek after spiritual light? *S. John iii. 19; viii. 12.*

II. *He that rejecteth Me, and receiveth not My words, hath one that judgeth him.* Ib. 48.

For that word will judge him in the last day. The written word; the preached word; the word of providence; the word of conscience; the word of inspiration. Do I attend to these? These will be my judges. *Rev. xx. 12.*

III. *I have not spoken of Myself.* Ib. 49.

Oh, that I could say so—that what God had commanded me, that I had spoken, that I had done. No impulse—no passion—no selfishness. Who can say this for himself? At least not I, O Lord. *S. Matt. x. 19, 20.*

Text.

All things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light. Eph. v. 13.

The Gospel for this Sunday is either that for one of those after Epiphany, or that for the twenty-fifth after Trinity.

OF THE BARREN FIG-TREE.

Read S. Matt. xxi. 17-22. (S. Mark xi.)

I. *He found nothing thereon but leaves only. Ib. 19.*

The Lord was hungered. He sought food on His own tree, and what did He find? An empty show. Such, alas, too often is my case. How often does He come to me and find me such or worse? *Is. v. 1-4.*

II. *He said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. Ib.*

Yet (*S. Mark xi.*) the time of figs was not come. If, then, He could not abide fruitlessness before the season, how much less will He bear it in me, who have wasted occasion after occasion, and misspent His gifts? *Jer. xlviii. 10.*

III. *And presently the fig-tree withered away. Ib.*

For He withdrew His blessing. Where His Spirit is not, how can there be life? He will not continue grace to those who use it not; and they who neglect what they have now, may not find it again when they would. Lord, spare and help me. *S. Luke viii. 18.*

Text.

If it bear fruit, well; and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down. S. Luke xiii. 9.

THE VINEYARD LET OUT TO HUSBANDMEN.

Read S. Matt. xxi. 33-36. (S. Mark, S. Luke.)

I. *A certain householder planted a vineyard.* Ib. 33.

Which He did not give, but let out to husbandmen, fenced around by His laws; having the winepress of His sacraments; the guardianship of His angels. This is my soul, and He looks for fruit from it. *Deut. x. 12, 13.*

II. *He sent his servants to the husbandmen, &c.* Ib. 34.

So He has to me—His word, His sacraments, His ministers, His inspirations. He calls for the fruits due to Him. Where are they? Have I, like them, abused His messengers, neglected His grace, refused to render Him His due? *Eph. iv. 11, 12.*

III. *Again he sent other servants.* Ib. 36.

Yes, twice and thrice; and though their fellows were beaten and killed, they went forth at His bidding. A pattern of obedience to me. Do I go forth, come what may, to do His holy will? *Gal. i. 15, 16.*

Text.

They have made my pleasant portion a desolate wilderness. Jer. xii. 10.

THE ONLY SON SLAIN BY THE HUSBANDMEN.

Read ib. 37-46. (Ib.)

I. *Last of all he sent unto them his son.* Ib. 37.

This He hoped would secure reverence. In us warmth of affection ; a spirit of self-denial ; deep humility. But has it produced this in me ? Do I esteem His mercy ? *Ps. cvi. 42-45.*

II. *This is the heir, come, let us kill him.* Ib. 38.

How shocking ! Yet when I wilfully sin, I am as they. Not, indeed, one who first crucified Him, but one who casts Him forth from the soul, His vineyard in me. Deliver me, O Lord, from this. *Heb. vi. 6.*

III. *What will he do unto those husbandmen ?* Ib. 40.

What else could it be but well-deserved ruin and destruction ? Yet He has spared me, and placed me there, where I may learn His will, and, denying my own, may perform His. *Is. v. 5, 6 ; 1 Cor. ix. 27.*

Text.

See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh.
Heb. xii. 25.

THE MARRIAGE OF THE KING'S SON.

Read S. Matt. xxii. 1-10.

I. *He sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden . . and they would not come.* Ib. 3.

The union of the divine and human natures was in Christ. To the feast of this His Gospel we are bidden. In numberless ways are we called; but in how many ways we shew neglect of His invitation! *Is. lv. 1.*

II. *He sent forth his armies and destroyed those murderers.* Ib. 7.

They begun by neglect, then made light of His messengers, then ill-treated, then slew them. So they went from worse to worse; and then came vengeance, for God will not be despised. *Heb. x. 29.*

III. *Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid.* Ib. 9.

From the highways were gathered in many, both bad and good. Nominally they came in at the sound of the Gospel. Did they really? and do I? This gathering may be the last. *Deut. xxxii. 29.*

Text.

Blessed are they which are called to the marriage-supper of the Lamb. Rev. xix. 9.

THE GUEST WITHOUT A WEDDING GARMENT.

Read ib. 11-14.

I. *He saw there a man which had not on a wedding-garment.* Ib. 11.

The life of faith, and acts conformable to it: these were wanting. There was an appearance of religion, but no reality. He was among the guests, but not of them. Am I any better? 1 *Pet.* iii. 3, 4. Have I that charity without which I am nothing? 1 *Cor.* xiii.

II. *Bind him hand and foot, and take him away.* Ib. 13.

God cannot abide a hypocritical profession; and we cannot be hid from Him. He sees, and sees through all. Do I conceal the real truth from men? I cannot from God. 1 *Cor.* iv. 5.

III. *Many are called, but few are chosen.* Ib. 14.

Such a truth ought to fill me with godly fear. The call is of God's free grace. But being called, it is my part to live according to His good will. 2 *Pet.* i. 10, 11.

Text.

Put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Eph. iv. 24.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO CÆSAR.

Read S. Matt. xxii. 15-22. (S. Mark, S. Luke.)

I. *Thou regardest not the person of men.* Ib. 16.

What greater praise could they have given Him? Himself the truth, teaching the way of truth, not caring for man. Is such my character? Is such my conduct? *Acts* iv. 19.

II. *Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar, or not?*
Ib. 17.

A hypocritical question, and yet an important one. Whose image was on that money? To whom, then, did it belong? In whose image was I made? Whose, then, am I? *1 Cor.* vi. 19, 20.

III. *Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's; and unto God the things that are God's.*
Ib. 21.

Render, then, to all their due. To man for God's sake. To God for His own. Are my body, soul, senses, talents, His? Am I His by creation, redemption, preservation, vocation? Render, then, thyself unto Him. *Rom.* vi. 13.

Text.

Render to all their dues. Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God, &c. *Rom.* xiii. 7; *1 Pet.* ii.

Twenty-seventh Sunday after Trinity.

THE GREAT COMMANDMENT.

Read S. Matt. xxii. 34-40. (S. Mark xii., S. Luke x.)

I. *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul.* Ib. 37.

This is the first and greatest commandment. The first, for every thing must begin with it; the greatest, for all must end there. Have I never acted otherwise? never preferred any thing to God? Yet His love to us is beyond all. *Rom. viii. 35, 39.*

II. *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.* Ib. 39.

This is only second to the first and greatest. The rule is very simple; all love themselves and desire their own good. Do not I? Then such should be my affection, my desire for my neighbour. And who is my neighbour? *Gal. vi. 10.*

III. *On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.* Ib. 40.

Here, then, is a motive and encouragement to fallen man. How can he fulfil the law? By love! Would I fulfil it, let me bend all my thoughts and words and actions thither towards the exercise of love. *Rom. xiii. 8.*

Text.

Now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity. 1 Cor. xiii. 13.

The Gospel for this Sunday is that for the twenty-fifth Sunday after Trinity.

THE PHARISEES REPROVED.

Read S. Matt. xxiii. 1-39. (S. Mark xii., S. Luke xx.)

I. *Whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do.* Ib. 3.

For they sit in Moses' seat. It is not the man, but the office and the authority. We do right to obey those set over us, though evil men. We must not imitate them, least of all where they say and do not. S. Matt. vii. 21.

II. *Their works they do for to be seen of men.* Ib. 5.

The servant of God must try to please Him, not his fellow-creatures. If he will do otherwise, he will have his reward; both cannot be truly served. Gal. i. 10.

III. *Ye are like unto whited sepulchres.* Ib. 27.

One sin always follows another. Here is hypocrisy; and there is no greater folly. I cannot deceive God. By Him I must be judged. Heb. iv. 12.

Text.

Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. S. Matt. vi. 5.

THE DESOLATION FORETOLD.

Read S. Matt. xxiv. 1-28. (S. Mark, S. Luke.)

- I. *When ye shall see the abomination of desolation, . . . stand in the holy place. Ib. 15.*

I am that temple of God, and must see the hour of desolation—the enemy—death. *Now one of Israel by vocation, I need flee to the rock, which is Christ. *Am I risen in Him? let me not go down to earthly things. *Am I planted in His vineyard? I must no longer care for the garment of the old conversation. (**Ib.* 16, 17, 18.) *S. John ix. 4.*

- II. *Woe unto them that are with child . . . in those days. Ib. 19.*

Woe to those who have conceived good desires, but brought nothing forth; on whom death shall come, chilled and cold in the service of God, or in holiday-making and idleness. *S. Luke xxi. 34.*

- III. *Then shall be great tribulation. Ib. 21.*

At that awful hour all will be seen in a different light. Burdens now shaken off from the conscience will have double weight. Take heed, then, now, while there is time. *Rev. vi. 12-17.*

Text.

The Lord grant unto (us) that (we) may find mercy of the Lord in that day. 2 Tim. i. 18.

WE MUST WATCH FOR THE LORD'S COMING.

Read S. Matt. xxiv. 29-51. (S. Mark, S. Luke.)

I. *Ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.*
Ib. 42.

Common prudence should teach us to be prepared for what must come, we know not when. If He were now at hand, how should I be found? *S. Luke xviii. 8.*

II. *Blessed is that servant whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing (watching).* Ib. 46.

The blessed promises of God are a still further encouragement to watch. Is it not so, that when I have watched I have been preserved from sin? And is not this in itself blessed? *2 Pet. iii. 14.* And hereafter?

III. *But and if that evil servant say in his heart, My Lord delayeth His coming.* Ib. 48.

When once we reckon on our Lord's delay, we are in great peril; still worse, when we act as if He would certainly delay. Have I or no put aside the thought of His coming? Have I looked for it? *2 Pet. iii. 3, 4.*

Text.

What I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch.
S. Mark xiii. 37.

THE TEN VIRGINS.

Read S. Matt. xxv. 1-13.

I. *Five of them were wise, and five were foolish. Ib. 2.*

Yet all were virgins—all had lamps—all went out to meet their Lord. But the profession of some was barren. They had not the oil of divine love. *S. James ii. 17.*

II. *At midnight there was a cry made, Behold the bridegroom cometh. Ib. 6.*

And they who had been careless thought the wise could help them. But in that hour each must answer for himself; and the foolish were too late. When He cometh we know not. *Ps. xlix. 7; Prov. i. 26.*

III. *They that were ready went in with him to the marriage. Ib. 10.*

Watchfulness—preparedness—waiting for the Lord: these are safe tempers and dispositions. But if we neglect the day of salvation, that great day must come upon us unawares. Lord, spare me! *2 Cor. vi. 2.*

Text.

The night cometh, when no man can work.
S. John ix. 4.

THE PARABLE OF THE TALENTS.

Read S. Matt. xxv. 14-30. (S. Luke xix.)

I. *Unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one. Ib. 15.*

To all according to their ability, that all may serve God therewith, and bring glory to Him. (S. Luke xix. 13.) They are for His service, not for our pleasure and waste. Have I thought how many He has bestowed on me, and for what purpose? 1 Pet. ii. 5, 9.

II. *After a long time the lord of those servants cometh. Ib. 19.*

And now is their time of reckoning. They who served Him faithfully are bidden to be partakers of His joy; not because they had many talents, but because they had used aright what He gave. 2 Cor. vi. 1.

III. *I was afraid, and went and hid my talent in the earth. Ib. 25.*

This slothful servant had not lost, but he had not used the one grace given to him; and yet he was condemned. How many have I not only left unused, but abused and lost? Prov. xix. 15.

Text.

Neglect not the gift that is in thee. 1 Tim. iv. 14.

THE LAST JUDGMENT.

Read S. Matt. xxv. 31-46.

I. *Then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory.*
Ib. 31.

He the judge of all, before whom all shall then be gathered. The sheep, they who heard and followed Him, on one side, full of joy; the goats, followers of their own lusts, on the other. Where, Lord, shall I be, if Thou dost not help me now, and spare me then? *Rev. i. 7.*

II. *Come, ye blessed of My Father.* Ib. 34.

First, the voice of mercy, more ready to save than to condemn. Would I hear this addressed to me? Seek Him, follow Him, serve Him now. In humility, in love, in tenderness to His poor and afflicted ones, as unto Him (ver. 40). Do I? Time is short! *Eccles. ix. 10; xi. 1.*

III. *Depart from Me, ye cursed.* Ib. 41.

Who can abide these awful words? Banishment from Him for ever! Who must abide it? They who have not done what He bade; who cared not for Him or for His; who believed not. They have cast themselves out. Yet, O Lord, still will I hope in Thee. Cast me not away, O Lord. *Hos. xiii. 9.*

Text.

Lord, remember me when Thou comest (in) Thy kingdom. S. Luke xxiii. 42.

Characters and Titles of Christ,

in contrast with our own, are abbreviated from the same work. They were originally intended for a month's meditation before the holy Communion. Other titles of Christ, mentioned in His own discourses, are to be found in their places, as, the "Way," the "Door," the "Good Shepherd," the "Vine." Pp. 349-352, &c.

(1)
CHRIST, *The King of kings*, and Lord of lords (1 *Tim.* i. 17; *Rev.* xix. 16). We His poor debtors, having nothing to pay (*S. Matt.* xviii. 24), crying for mercy (*ib.* 26). He yet loving us and giving Himself for us (*Gal.* ii. 20).

Thou art my King, O God; send help unto Jacob. Ps. xliv. 5.

(2)
CHRIST, *Our Lord*, laying His light yoke upon us (*Matt.* xi. 29). We His rebellious servants (*Jer.* ii. 19, 20), bought of Him (1 *Cor.* vi. 20), called to live wholly to Him (*Rom.* xiv. 7, 8), for His love to us (*Hos.* xi. 4).

This is His name whereby He shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness. Jer. xxiii. 6.

(3)
CHRIST, *Our Master*, teaching us (*Is.* xlvi. 17). We, like Mary, sitting at His feet (*S. Luke* x. 39), yet too careless of His words (*S. Matt.* xiii. 19). He, in mercy, waiting till we hear (*Is.* xxx. 18-21).

He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths. Is. ii. 3.

(4)

CHRIST, *Our Friend*, ever faithful and true, the friend of sinners (*Matt.* xi. 19). We betraying and deserting Him, preferring the company of the ungodly (*S. John* i. 11; iii. 19). He still faithful to us (*2 Tim.* ii. 13; *Rev.* i. 5).

There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother. Prov. xviii. 24.

(5)

CHRIST, *Our Brother*, not ashamed to call us brethren (*Heb.* ii. 11, 12). We, as it were, guilty of a brother's blood (*Gen.* xlii. 21). He gone before, not to condemn, but to save and keep us alive (*Gen.* xlv. 5).

He is our brother and our flesh. Gen. xxxvii. 27.

(6)

CHRIST, *Our Father*, who begat and called us sons (*Is.* ix. 6; *2 Cor.* i. 3). We as prodigal sons (*Luke* xv.). Deserting Him, yet longing to return (*ib.* 17). He receiving us again, adorning, refreshing us (*ib.* 20).

Father, I have sinned against heaven and before Thee. S. Luke xv. 18.

(7)

CHRIST, *Spouse of our Souls*, who betrothed us homeless (*Hos.* ii. 19, 20). We naked and poor (*Ezek.* xvi. 5), and now faithless (*Jer.* iii. 1). He still sealing us His own (*Ezek.* ix. 4).

He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself. Is. lxi. 10.

(8)

CHRIST, *The Sun of Righteousness* (*Mal.* iv. 2), who is the true light (*S. John* i. 9). We as the blind man, or as one in darkness, longing for light (*S. Luke* xviii. 41; *Is.* l. 10). He rising to give light and glory to all (*Is.* lx. 1).

The Lord my God shall make my darkness to be light. Ps. xviii. 28.

(9)

CHRIST, *The Food of Wayfarers* (*S. John* vi. 57) on their way to Zion. We as pilgrims on the road (*Heb.* xi. 13), needing strength for the journey (*1 Kings* xix. 7). He providing food and sustenance for us (*Ps.* lxxviii. 24; *Josh.* v. 12).

I am a stranger with Thee, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were. Ps. xxxix. 12.

(10)

CHRIST, *both Host and Feast* (*Is.* xxv. 6), ministering food to His servants (*S. Luke* xii. 37). We most unworthy, like one needing a wedding-garment (*Matt.* xxii. 12). He still inviting us to partake of Himself (*S. John* vi. 55; *Ps.* xxxiv. 8).

Blessed are they which are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb. Rev. xix. 9.

(11)

CHRIST, *Himself the Guest*, bidding us to receive Him (*S. Luke* xix. 5). We most ungrateful and careless (*Is.* i. 3; *Matt.* xxv. 43). He still waiting without, standing, knocking (*Rev.* iii. 20).

Come in, thou blessed of the Lord, wherefore standest thou without? For I have prepared the house. Gen. xxiv. 31.

(12)

CHRIST, *The Beloved*, white as bread and ruddy as wine, the chief among ten thousand (*Cant.* v. 10-16). We vile, yet beloved of Him (*Cant.* i. 7). He desiring to speak comfortably to us (*Is.* xl. 2), and teach us to mortify fleshly affections, and love Him (*Gal.* v. 24).

I have found Him whom my soul loveth. *Cant.* iii. 4.

(13)

CHRIST, *The Heir of His Father*, full of riches (*Heb.* i. 2). We, like the beggar Lazarus, full of sores (*S. Luke* xvi. 20). He made poor for our sakes (2 *Cor.* viii. 9), and pouring upon us needy ones the fulness of His love (*Rev.* iii. 17, 18).

The eyes of all wait upon Thee, O Lord; and Thou givest them their meat in due season. *Ps.* cxlv. 15.

(14)

CHRIST, *The Hidden God*, veiled in human flesh (*Is.* xlv. 15; *Heb.* x. 20). We too much loving observation and the praise of men (*Matt.* xxiii. 5). He desiring to lead us into solitude with Him (*Hos.* ii. 14), and feed us with the hidden manna (*Rev.* ii. 17).

Make Thy face to shine upon Thy servant. *Ps.* xxxi. 16.

(15)

CHRIST, *The Bread of Life* (*S. John* vi. 35), the food of angels (*Ps.* lxxviii. 25). We, of whom it might well be said, "It is not meet to take the children's bread," &c. (*Matt.* xv. 20). He yet gladdening us with heavenly food (*Ps.* eiv. 15).

Lord, evermore give us this bread. *S. John* vi. 34.

(16)

CHRIST, *The Wine* prepared of Wisdom (*Prov.* ix. 5). We the simple ones lacking understanding (*Ib.* 6). He, in mercy, preparing this cup for us, ready to perish (*Prov.* xxxi. 6); and brings us to His home (*Cant.* viii. 2).

Thou hast anointed my head with oil, and my cup shall be full. Ps. xxiii. 5.

(17)

CHRIST, *Our Great High Priest*, offering Himself for us, holy, harmless, undefiled (*Heb.* v. 1; vii. 26). We fallen, yet of a chosen race (1 *Pet.* ii. 9). He bidding us offer Him as our victim, and ourselves as temples of His grace (2 *Cor.* vi. 16).

An High Priest, touched with the feeling of our infirmities. Heb. iv. 15.

(18)

CHRIST, *The Man of Sorrows*, wounded for our iniquities (*Is.* liii. 3-5). We loving too well bodily comfort and ease, and shunning His cross (*Phil.* iii. 18, 19). He, in love, teaching us no longer to glory, save in His cross, but to follow Him (*Gal.* vi. 14-17).

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation? Rom. viii. 35.

(19)

CHRIST, *With a Mother's love*, having compassion on us (*Is.* xlix. 15). We little ones in spirit, babes in Christ (1 *Cor.* iii. 1). He desiring to make us long for spiritual nourishment (1 *Pet.* ii. 2), and grow up in Him (*Eph.* iv. 15).

When my father and my mother forsake me, the Lord taketh me up. Ps. xxvii. 12.

(20)

CHRIST, *The Expected of Nations* (*Gen.* xlix. 10, 26), whose desires are warm towards us (*S. Luke* xxii. 15). We too slothful and cold towards Him (*Prov.* xiii. 4; *Hos.* vii. 11). He drawing our souls to aspire after Him (*Is.* xxvi. 9).

The desire of our soul is to Thy Name, and to the remembrance of Thee. *Is.* xxvi. 8.

(21)

CHRIST, *A Furnace of Love* (*Cant.* viii. 6), jealous over our souls. We too lukewarm and careless of His love (*Rev.* iii. 15, 16). He sending fire on earth (*S. Luke* xii. 49), and desiring to warm and melt us with His love (*Is.* lxiv. 1, 2).

Did not our heart burn within us, while He talked with us by the way? *S. Luke* xxiv. 32.

(22)

CHRIST, *The Physician of souls*, pouring forth His own blood for our healing (*Is.* liii. 12). We like the man fallen among thieves (*S. Luke* x. 30), or as he who waited for the troubling of the waters (*S. John* v. 5). He, as the good Samaritan, binding up and healing (*S. Luke* x. 34).

Lord, he whom Thou lovest is sick; speak the word only, and (Thy) servant shall be healed. *S. John* xi. 3; *S. Matt.* viii. 8.

(23)

CHRIST, *The Pearl of great price*, for whom we may well part with all (*S. Matt.* xiii. 46). We like the foolish merchant trading with trifles (*Ezek.* xiii. 19), or as the filthy swine (*S. Matt.* vii. 6). He counselling us to lose all and find Him (*Phil.* iii. 7, &c.).

The price of wisdom is above rubies. *Job* xxviii. 18.

(24)

CHRIST, *The Tree of Life*, bearing fruit for the healing of the nations (*Rev.* xxii. 2). We planting only weeds in our garden (*Prov.* xxiv. 30, &c.). He giving us Himself, the true vine, making us branches in Him (*S. John* xv. 5).

I sat down under His shadow with great delight, and His fruit was sweet to my taste. Cant. ii. 3.

(25)

CHRIST, *The Lord of Hosts*, alone able to overcome the strong man (*S. Luke* xi. 22). We, His professed soldiers, yet halting (1 *Kings* xviii. 21), and fighting uncertainly (1 *Cor.* ix. 26, 27). He coming, not to send peace (*S. Matt.* x. 34), but to train us for His service (2 *Tim.* ii. 3).

The Lord of Hosts is with us. Ps. xlv. 7.

(26)

CHRIST, *The Fountain of Life*, open for sinners (*Zech.* xiii. 1). We, foolish ones, leaving the true fountain for broken cisterns (*Jer.* ii. 13). He still offering us living waters (*John* iv. 13; *Rev.* xxii. 17) to moisten our dry and barren souls (*Is.* xlv. 3).

My soul is athirst for God. Ps. xlii. 2.

(27)

CHRIST, *The Hunter for Souls*, Himself wounded for us (*Lam.* iii. 12, 13). We like wild asses, far away from Him (*Hos.* viii. 9). He seeking us, yea, and wounding us, that He may train us for Himself (*Jer.* xxx. 14, 17, &c.; *Phil.* iii. 12).

Faithful are the wounds of a friend. Prov. xxvii. 6.

(28)

CHRIST, *Our Redeemer*, who has purchased us with His blood (1 *Pet.* i. 18, 19). We in captivity and banishment, longing to be free (*Ps.* exxxvii. 1). He coming to be our ransom (1 *Tim.* ii. 3-6), and to redeem us from all evil (*Tit.* ii. 14).

Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood. Rev. v. 9.

(29)

CHRIST, *All that is Good*, offered freely to all (*Exod.* xxxiii. 19; *Is.* lv. 1). We surrounded with all evil, calling evil good, &c. (*Ps.* xl. 12; *Is.* v. 20.) He teaching us to know what is really good, and giving us of His fulness (*S. John* i. 16; *S. James* i. 17).

How great is His goodness, and how great is His beauty! Zech. ix. 17.

(30)

CHRIST, *The Watchful Pastor* (*Ps.* xxiii. ; 1 *Pet.* ii. 25), giving His life for the sheep (*S. John* x. 14, 15). We His foolish, wandering flock (*Is.* liii. 6), exposed to thieves (*S. John* x. 12). He finding and carrying us home (*S. Luke* xv. 5, 6), and feeding us with Himself (*Is.* xl. 11).

I have gone astray like a sheep that is lost; oh, seek Thy servant. Ps. cxix. 176.

(31)

CHRIST, *Our Example*, pattern of all holiness (*Exod.* xxv. 40; 1 *Pet.* ii. 21). We, once His image, now obscured by sin (*Gen.* i. 27; *Lam.* iv. 1). He giving us Himself anew, that, by seeing Him, we may be transformed to His likeness (2 *Cor.* iii. 18), and conformed to the Divine will (*Acts* xiii. 22).

Shew me Thy ways, O Lord. Teach me Thy paths. Ps. xxv. 3.

TABLES.

*On this and the three following pages reference is given to some of the Daily Thoughts which may be found useful on special occasions.**

Before the Holy Communion.

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The Eucharist a great feast . . .	216
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After Communion.

Christ known in breaking of bread . .	171
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In addition to these, one or more of the Characters and Titles of Christ being specially intended to refer to His gifts to us in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, may be used. (See pp. 405-412.)

* The general privileges and responsibilities of BAPTIZED PERSONS are referred to in the Thoughts on the Commission to the Apostles (pp. 186, 187); and again in Whitsun Week (pp. 202, 205, 207).

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The Daily Thoughts referred to on this page relate to the several events which took place on each of the days

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This series, beginning with the promise of betrayal by Judas, would furnish one additional subject for every Friday throughout the year.

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Thoughts appropriate to Vigils (i. e., evens, or days of fasting immediately preceding certain fasts), will be found at pages 68, 112, 113, 114, 141, 266, 325, 401.

SPECIAL OCCASIONS.

During the seasons of Advent and Lent, or on Wednesday and Friday, or at other seasons of more than usual retirement, some of the subjects referred to below might be found useful for consideration. (Those at the beginning of January, and at the end of Epiphany and Trinity, would, in many years, be otherwise missed altogether.)*

The Attributes of God	221-228
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Harmony of the Gospels.

IN HIM WAS LIFE,
AND THE LIFE
WAS THE LIGHT OF MEN.

* * This Harmony of the Four Gospels was first compiled from the headings to the sections of Greswell's *Harmonia Evangelica*. It has now been much enlarged, to form part of the little volume called *Daily Steps towards Heaven*. It follows almost exclusively the chronological order of Greswell. In one or two places (as on Palm Sunday) it has been modified from Townsend's *New Testament Chronologically Arranged*, from which work the names of places and dates are chiefly taken. The places at which the events happened are inserted in the blank columns, wherever there is room. Through the kindness of a brother it has had the benefit of an additional revision.

N.B. The references are frequently made to the whole subject rather than to the words quoted.

EVENTS.	S. MATT.	S. MARK.	S. LUKE.	S. JOHN.
Julian Period, from 4708-4742. Vulgar Æra, from B.C. 6 to A.D. 29.	Writt. in Palestine, A.D.	Writt. at Rome, A.D. 60.	Writt. in Achaia, A.D. 63.	Writt. at Ephesus, A.D. 97.
1.	ch. ver.	ch. ver.	ch. ver.	ch. ver.
<i>The Divinity, Humanity, Infancy, and Childhood of Christ.</i> (From B.C. 6 to A.D. 7.)				
The DIVINITY OF CHRIST	. .	. .	. .	1: 1-5
S. Luke's preface . .	. .	. .	1: 1-4	. .
S. John Baptist foretold	. .	. .	" 5-23	. .
— conceived . . .	. .	. .	" 24, 25	. .
Mary espoused to Joseph	1: 18	. .	" 27	[eth.
The Annunciation . .	. .	. .	" 26-38	Nazar-
Mary visits Elizabeth .	. .	. .	" 39-55	Hebron.
Song of the B. Virgin .	. .	. .	" 46	. .
Returns to Nazareth .	. .	. .	" 56	. .

HARMONY OF THE GOSPELS.

EVENTS.	S. MATT.	S. MARK.	S. LUKE.	S. JOHN.
	ch. ver.	ch. ver.	ch. ver.	ch. ver.
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S. John Baptist born and named	1: 57	<i>Hebron.</i>
The Song of Zacharias	" 68	. .
John's early life	" 80	<i>Desert.</i>
The BIRTH OF CHRIST . . . . .	. .	. .	2: 1-7	<i>Bethle-</i>
The Shepherds . . . . .	. .	. .	" 8	<i>hem.</i>
Their adoration . . . . .	. .	. .	" 16	. .
The Circumcision . . . . .	. .	. .	" 21	<i>Temple.</i>
The Name of JESUS	" 25	. .	" "	. .
Genealogies of Christ	" 1-17	. .	3: 23	. .
The Presentation and Pu- rification . . . . .	. .	. .	2: 22-39	. .
Song of Simeon . . . . .	. .	. .	" 29	. .
The Wise Men	2: 1	. .	. .	<i>Bethle-</i>
Flight into Egypt	" 13	. .	. .	<i>hem.</i>
The Holy Innocents	" 16	. .	. .	<i>ib.</i>
Return to Nazareth	" 19	. .	" 39	. .
Childhood of CHRIST . . . . .	. .	. .	" 40	<i>Naza-</i>
Christ in the Temple . . . . .	. . <i>Jerusalem.</i>	. .	" 46	<i>reth.</i>
The Youth of CHRIST . . . . .	. .	. .	" 51	<i>ib.</i>
(A.D. 7—A.D. 26.)				
2.				
<i>Ministry of S. John Baptist. The first disciples of Jesus. (Age 30.)</i>				
(A.D. 26, 27.)				
Mission of S. John Bapt.	. .	1: 1-3	. .	1: 6-8
Christ the true light . . . . .	. .	. .	. .	" 9-14
S. John B. preaches	3: 1	" 3-8	3: 1	" 15
— baptises	" 5	" 5	" 7	<i>Betha-</i>
Bears witness to Christ	" 11, 12	" 7, 8	" 15	<i>bara.</i>
His public ministry . . . . .	. .	. .	" 18	<i>Desert.</i>
CHRIST baptised (THE FATHER—THE SPIRIT)	" 13-15	" 9-11	" 21-23	<i>Jordan.</i>
— in the wilderness	" 16, 17	. .	. .	. .
— tempted thrice	4: 1	" 12	4: 1	<i>N. of</i>
Angels minister to Him	" 3	. .	" 3-13	<i>Jericho.</i>
John's second testimony	" 11	" 13	. .	. .
<i>Behold the Lamb of God</i>	<i>Betha</i>	<i>bara.</i>	. .	1: 19
<i>Again the next day</i>	" 29
	" 35

HARMONY OF THE GOSPELS.

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	ch. ver.	ch. ver.	ch. ver.	ch. ver.
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Jesus finds Philip . .	<i>Going</i>	<i>to Gali</i>	<i>lee.</i>	" 44
Philip finds Nathanael	" 45
Jesus receives him	" 47-51
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3.				
<i>Christ's first public ap- pearance and acts. (31st year.) (A.D. 26, 27.)</i>				
The marriage at Cana; } water made wine. . }	2: 1
Went to Capernaum	" 12
The first Passover	<i>Jerus</i>	<i>alem.</i>	" 13
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Departure to Judea	" 22
Dispute of John's discip.	<i>Ænon</i>	<i>and</i>	<i>Salim.</i>	" 25
John's last testimony, } <i>He must increase. . }</i>	" 27
Christ goes into Galilee through Samaria . .	<i>To</i>	<i>Sychar.</i>	. .	4: 1
The woman at the well	. .	<i>Samaria</i>	. .	" 4
Received in Galilee . .	. .	. .	4: 14	" 6
Heals a nobleman's son	. .	<i>Cana.</i>	. .	" 43
				" 47
<hr/>				
4.				
<i>Christ's first public preaching. (31st year.) (A.D. 27.)</i>				
John in prison	4: 12	1: 14	. .	. .
In the synag. of Galilee	. .	. .	" 15	. .
In the synagogue at . .	<i>Naza</i>	<i>reth.</i>	" 16	. .
Christ thrust out . . .	. .	. .	" 28, 29	. .
Went to Capernaum . .	" 13	. .	" 31	. .
And'w, Simon, James, } and John called . . }	" 18-22	" 16	<i>Sea of</i>	<i>Galilee.</i>
Teaches in a synagogue	. .	" 21	" 31	<i>Caper-</i>
A devil cast out . . .	. .	" 23	" 33	<i>naum.</i>
Simon's mother healed	8: 14	" 29	" 38	. .
The sick and diseased .	" 16	" 32	" 40	. .

HARMONY OF THE GOSPELS.

EVENTS.	S. MATT.		S. MARK.		S. LUKE.		S. JOHN.	
	ch.	ver.	ch.	ver.	ch.	ver.	ch.	ver.
5.								
<i>Christ's first general circuit. (32d year. A.D. 27.)</i>								
Begun by prayer . . .			1:	35	4:	42	<i>Going from Capern. N. of do.</i>	
The whole of Galilee . .	4:	23-25	"	39	"	44		
SERMON ON THE MOUNT	ch. (5-7)		PLAIN.		ch. (6)			
The Beatitudes . . .	5:	3	The contents of the Sermon on the Plain (S. Luke vi.) are placed here parallel with those of the Sermon on the Mount, to save the repetition on the next page, and to shew the difference between them.		6:	20, 24		
(4 Beatitudes.) (Woes)	"	"			"	"		
<i>Let yr light. Ye are, &c.</i>	"	16			"	"		
<i>Ye have heard, &c.</i>	"	21			"	"		
<i>If thine eye offend . .</i>	"	29			"	"		
<i>Swear not at all . . .</i>	"	33			"	"		
<i>Give to him that . . .</i>	"	42			"	30		
<i>Love your enemies . .</i>	"	43			"	27, 35		
<i>If ye love them, &c. . .</i>	"	46			"	"		
(<i>If ye lend</i>)	"	"			"	34		
Alms. Prayer	6:	1, 5			Mentioned in S. Luke at a separate time (ch. xi. xii.) (See p. ix.)			
The Lord's Prayer . . .	"	9						
Fasting	"	17						
Treasure in heaven . . .	"	19						
Two masters	"	24						
Beh. the fowls (ravens)	"	26						
Consider the lilies . . .	"	28						
<i>Judge not</i>	7:	1				37		
(<i>Give, and, &c.</i>)	"	"				38		
The mote	"	3				41		
Pearls before swine . . .	"	6				"		
<i>Ask, seek, knock . . .</i>	"	7				"		
The strait gate	"	13				"		
False prophets	"	15				"		
The good tree	"	17				43		
<i>Not every one, &c. . .</i>	"	21				"		
House on a rock	"	24				47		
Draught of fishes . . .	<i>Gennesaret.</i>				5:	1		
A leper healed	8:	2-4	"	40	"	12		
Christ retires for pray'r to	<i>the Desert.</i>			45	"	16	<i>Galilee.</i>	
The palsy healed	9:	2	2:	1	"	17	<i>Capern.</i>	
Levi (Matthew) called . .	"	9	"	13	"	27	<i>Gennes.</i>	
Christ supped with him . .	"	"	"	15	"	29	<i>Capern.</i>	
<i>Thy disciples fast not . .</i>	"	"	"	18	"	33	"	

HARMONY OF THE GOSPELS.

EVENTS.	S. MATT.	S. MARK.	S. LUKE.	S. JOHN.
	ch. ver.	ch. ver.	ch. ver.	ch. ver.
6.				
<i>Second year of Christ's ministry. (32d year.)</i>				
(A.D. 27.)				
He attends a 2d Passover	. .	. .	. .	5: 1
The pool of Bethesda .	. .	. .	. .	" 2
The Jews find fault, strive to kill Him. He appeals to the Father; to John B.	} . .	. .	. .	" 10-47
<i>Search the Scriptures.</i>				" 39
Corn pluck. on the Sabb.	12: 1	2: 23	6: 1	<i>From</i>
Return to Capernaum .	" 9	. .	. .	<i>Jerusal.</i>
The wither'd hand heal'd	" 10	3: 1	" 6	<i>Capern.</i>
Conspir. w. the Herodians	" 14	" 6	" 11	. .
Followed by many whose diseases He healed .	{ "15-21	" 7	<i>On a journey.</i>	
A whole night in prayer			" 12	<i>N. of Ca.</i>
The 12 Apostles ordained	10: 2-4	" 14	" 13	. .
SERMON ON THE PLAIN .	<i>(See page iv.)</i>		" 17-49	. .
The Centurion's servant	8: 5-13	. .	7: 1	<i>Capern.</i>
The widow of Nain . .	. .	. .	" 11	<i>Nain.</i>
Messengers from John B.	11: 2	. .	" 17	<i>On a</i>
Christ discourses of him	" 7	. .	" 24	<i>journey.</i>
<i>Wo unto thee, Chorazin .</i>	" 20	. .	. .	. .
<i>I thank Thee, O Father .</i>	" 25	. .	. .	. .
<i>Come unto Me, all . .</i>	" 28	. .	. .	. .
Christ's feet washed by } a penitent. . . . }	. .	. .	" 36	. .
7.				
<i>Christ's second general circuit and return. (32d year.) (A.D. 27.)</i>				
Through Galilee back } to Capernaum . }	. .	3: 19	8: 1-3	. .
A great concourse, and } His relations alarmed }	. .	" 20	. .	<i>Capernaum.</i>
He cures a demoniac .	12: 22	. .	. .	. .
The Pharisees blaspheme } Blasph. ag. the H. Ghost }	" 24	" 22
They ask for a sign . .	" 38
The unclean spirit . .	" 43

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EVENTS.	S. MATT.	S. MARK.	S. LUKE.	S. JOHN.
	ch. ver.	ch. ver.	ch. ver.	ch. ver.
<i>Who is my mother ?</i> . . .	12: 46	3: 31	. .	"
Parable of the sower . . .	13: 1-9	4: 1	8: 4	<i>Lake</i>
The tares	" 24	. .	. .	<i>of</i>
Mustard-seed	" 31	" 30	. .	<i>Galilee.</i>
Leaven	" 33	. .	. .	. .
Why in parables ? . . .	" 10-17	" 9	" 9	. .
The sower explained . . .	" 18-23	" 14-20	" 11-15	. .
The candle	" . .	" 21	" 16	. .
The treasure	" 44	. .	. .	. .
The pearl	" 45	. .	. .	. .
The net	" 47	. .	. .	. .
<i>My mother & my brethren</i> . . .	. .	. .	" 19	. .
Christ crosses the lake . . .	" 53	" 35	" 22-26	. .
Some prof. a wish to foll. . .	8: 18	5: 18	. .	. .
He calms the storm . . .	" 24	4: 37	" 23	. .
The two demoniacs } and swine. }	" 28	5: 1	" 27	<i>Gadara.</i>
One sent home . . . . .	. .	" 18	" 38	. .
Christ received sinners . . .	9: 1	. .	. .	<i>Capern.</i>
The Bridegroom	" 15	. .	. .	. .
New wine . . . . .	. .	. .	. .	. .
The issue healed	" 18	" 22	" 41	. .
Jairus's daughter rais'd } Two blind men restored }	" 27	. .	. .	<i>A jour-</i>
The dumb spirit	" 32	. .	. .	<i>ney.</i>
Return to Nazareth . . .	" 35	6: 1	. .	. .
8.				
<i>Christ's third general cir-</i> <i>cuit and mission of the</i> <i>12 Apostles. (33d year.)</i>	9: 35	6: 6	9: 1	. .
(A.D. 28.)				<i>On a</i>
Instructions to apostles . . .	10: 1	" 7-11	" 3	<i>journey.</i>
Herod hears of Christ } S. John B. death ment. }	14: 1	" 14	" 7	<i>S. W.</i>
The apostles return . . . .	. .	" 30	" 10	<i>Capern.</i>
The 5000 fed (Bethsaida) . .	" 13	" 30	. .	6: 1
The disciples dismissed . . .	" 22	" 45	. .	" 15
Walking on the water . . .	" 24	" 48	<i>Lake of</i>	" 18
Peter went to Him	" 28	. .	<i>Galilee.</i>	. .
Return to Capernaum . . .	" 34	" 53	. .	" 22
<i>I am the Bread of life</i>	" 35

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EVENTS.	S. MATT.		S. MARK.		S. LUKE.		S. JOHN.	
	ch.	ver.	ch.	ver.	ch.	ver.	ch.	ver.
<i>My flesh is meat indeed.</i>	6:	55
Some went back . . .	.	.	.	.	.	.	"	66
Judas's sin foretold . .	.	.	.	<i>Capernaum.</i>	.	.	"	70
9.								
<i>The third year of Christ's ministry begun.</i> (33d year.) (A.D. 28.)								
Scribes & Phari.visit him	15:	1-20	7:	1-23	.	.	<i>Capernaum.</i>	
"Unwashed hands". .	"	2	"	2	.	.	.	
What really defiles . .	"	17	"	18	.	.	.	
Depart.to Tyre and Sidon	"	21	"	24	.	.	.	
The Syrophœnic. woman	"	22	"	<i>ib.</i>	.	.	<i>Tyre.</i>	
Goes to the sea of Galilee	"	29	"	31	.	.	<i>Desert</i>	
Heals the deaf . . . .	.	.	"	32	.	.	<i>of Bethsaida.</i>	
Other sick and diseased	"	29	.	.	.	.	.
The 4000 fed	"	32	8:	1	.	.	.	
Crosses to Dalmanutha	"	39	"	10	.	<i>or</i>	<i>Magdal.</i>	
<i>No sign shall be given.</i>	16:	4	"	12	.	.	.	
Return to Bethsaida	"	4	"	13	.	.	.	
The heaven of the Pharis.	"	5	"	14	.	.	.	
A blind man healed . .	.	.	"	22	.	<i>Bethsaida.</i>	.	
S. Peter's confession . .	"	13	"	27	9:	18	<i>Cæsar</i>	
Christ must suffer . . .	"	21	"	31	"	22	<i>æa Phi-</i>	
<i>Take up the cross</i> . . .	"	24	"	34	"	23	<i>lippi.</i>	
THE TRANSFIGURATION	17:	1	9:	2	"	28	<i>Mount</i>	
<i>Elias must first come</i> . .	"	10	"	11	.	.	<i>Tabor.</i>	
He casts out a devil . .	"	14	"	14	"	37	.	
Why the disci. could not	"	19	"	28	.	.	(vii. 1.)	
Again pred. the passion	"	22	"	30	"	43	<i>Galilee.</i>	
Returns, and on the way	"	24	"	33	.	.	<i>Capernaum.</i>	
pays tribute (the fish)	"	27	.	.	.	.	.
Who shall be greatest . .	18:	1	"	33	"	46	.	
Little children	"	2	"	36	"	47	.	
<i>He that is not against us</i>	.	.	"	40	"	50	.	
<i>If thy hand offend thee</i> .	"	8	"	43	.	.	.	
How oft forgive	"	15	.	.	.	.	.
The unmerciful servant	"	23	.	.	.	.	.
10.								
<i>The feast of Tabernacles.</i> (33d year.) (A.D. 28.)	.	.	.	.	.	<i>Jeru salem.</i>	.	

HARMONY OF THE GOSPELS.

EVENTS.	S. MATT.	S. MARK.	S. LUKE.	S. JOHN.
	ch. ver.	ch. ver.	ch. ver.	ch. ver.
Advised to go to Jerusal.	7: 2
Attends the feast; teaches	" 10
<i>If any man thirst . . .</i>	" 37
Officers sent to take Him	" 30
Return unable	" 46
Went to the Mt. of Olives	8: 1
The adulteress brought	" 3
<i>Go, and sin no more . .</i>	" 11
<i>I am the light of the world</i>	" 12
<i>We are Abraham's seed</i>	" 33
<i>Before Abra. was I am .</i>	" 58
They seek to stone Christ	" 59
The blind man healed	9: 1
The Jews cast him out	" 13
Christ received him	" 35
Christ the door	10: 1
The Good Shepherd	" 11
11.				
<i>The Feast of Dedication.</i>	. .	<i>Jerusal em.</i>	. .	10: 22
(33d year.) (A.D. 28.)				
" Art Thou the Christ ?"	. .	<i>Solomon's porch.</i>		" 23
<i>My sheep hear My voice</i>	" 27
<i>I and My Father are one</i>	" 30
They try to take Him	" 39
He went beyond Jordan	" 40
Hears of Lazarus' sick'ess	11: 1-7
Went after 2 days to .	. .	<i>Beth any.</i>	. .	" 7
Lazarus raised	" 17
The Pharisees conspire	" 47-57
He retired to Ephraim	" 54
12.				
<i>Last three months of the third year.</i>				
<i>Mission of the LXX.</i>				
Approach of th' Passover	9: 51	<i>Thr'ugh</i>
Samaritans refuse Him	" 53	<i>Samaria</i>
Rebuke of His disciples	" 55	<i>to</i>
<i>Lord, I will follow Thee</i>	" 57	<i>Galilee.</i>
<i>Foxes have holes; Dead }</i>	" 58	. .
<i>bur. their d.; No man, &c }</i>	" 60, 62	. .

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EVENTS.	S. MATT.		S. MARK.		S. LUKE.		S. JOHN.	
	ch.	ver.	ch.	ver.	ch.	ver.	ch.	ver.
Instructions to the LXX.	10 :	1-12	.	.
Woe to Chorazin	"	13	.	.
The LXX. return	"	17	<i>Near Jerusal.</i>	
<i>I thank Thee, O Father.</i>	"	21		
A lawyer tempted Him	"	25	.	.
The good Samaritan	"	29	.	.
Martha and Mary	"	38	<i>On a journey.</i>	
The Lord's Prayer	11 :	1		
The friend at midnight.	"	5	.	.
The dumb spirit	"	14	.	.
The Pharisees blaspheme	"	15	.	.
<i>Yea rather blessed</i>	"	27	.	.
The sign of Jonas . .	(12 :	38)	.	.	"	29	.	.
He dines with a Pharisee	"	37	.	.
Woes to Phar. & Scribes	"	42	.	.
Whom we should fear	12 :	1	.	.
Refuses to settle a dispute	"	13	.	.
The rich man's barns	"	16	.	.
The ravens. The lilies	"	22-30	.	.
<i>Where your treasure is.</i>	"	34	.	.
Watching for the Lord	"	35	.	.
Divisions, not peace	"	51	.	.
Fate of the Galileans	13 :	1	.	.
The barren fig-tree	"	6	.	.
The woman bow'd togeth	"	11	.	.
The mustard-seed	"	18	.	.
<i>Are there few that be saved</i>	"	23	.	.
<i>Herod will kill Thee.</i>	"	31	.	.
<i>O Jerusalem, Jerusalem</i>	"	34	.	.
The dropsy healed	14 :	1, 8	.	.
Choice of upper room	"	7	.	.
Bid the poor to feast	"	12	.	.
All make excuse	"	15	.	.
Bear the cross (the cost)	"	25	.	.
The lost sheep (silver).	15 :	1	.	.
The prodigal son	"	11	.	.
The unjust steward	16 :	1	.	.
<i>No man can serve two ma.</i>	"	13	.	.
Dives and Lazarus	"	19	.	.
Offences-forgiveness, &c	17 :	1	.	.
The ten lepers	"	11	<i>Samaria</i>	
From Galilee to Peræa .	19 :	1	10 :	1	.	.		

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EVENTS.	S. MATT.		S. MARK.		S. LUKE.		S. JOHN.	
	ch.	ver.	ch.	ver.	ch.	ver.	ch.	ver.
Wh. the k. of God s. come?	17:	20	.	.
<i>One shall be taken</i> . . .	.	.	.	.	"	34	.	.
The judge and the widow	.	.	.	.	18:	1	.	.
Pharisee and Publican .	.	.	.	.	"	9	.	.
Divorce	19:	3	10:	2	.	.	.	.
He blessed little children	"	13	"	13	"	15	.	.
The rich young ruler	"	16	"	17	"	18	.	.
Of those "who leave all"	"	27	"	28	"	28	.	.
Labourers in the viney'd	20:	1	.	.	.	.	.	.
Goes up to Jerusalem .	"	17	"	32	.	.	.	.
foretelling His passion	"	18	"	33	"	31	.	.
Zebedee's children . .	"	20	"	35	"	.	.	.
A blind man healed . .	.	.	.	.	"	35	.	.
Zacchæus . . . . .	.	.	.	.	19:	1	.	.
Blind Bartimæus . . .	"	29	"	46	.	.	<i>Jericho.</i>	
10 servants and 10 pounds	.	.	.	.	"	12	.	.
<hr/>								
13.								
<i>The last Passover.</i>								
<i>Holy Week, &c.</i>								
(33d year.) (A.D. 29.)								
Christ went towards . .	<i>Jerusal em.</i>		.	.	19:	28	11:	55
6 days before th' Passover	<i>Bethany</i>		.	.	.	.	12:	1
Received by Simon . .	26:	6-13	14:	3-9	.	.	"	2-8
The supper at Bethany	.	.	.	.	.	.	"	2
Lazarus present (Martha)	.	.	.	.	.	.	"	"
Mary anointed Jesus .	"	7	"	3	.	.	"	3
Many came to see Him	.	.	.	.	.	.	"	9
<hr/>								
PALM SUNDAY.								
The people go out . .	.	.	<i>Beth phage.</i>		.	.	"	12
The ass sent for . . .	21:	1	11:	1	19:	29	.	.
The public entry . . .	"	7	"	7	"	35	.	.
Hosannah	"	9	"	9	.	.	.	.
Mourned over the city .	.	.	.	.	"	41	.	.
Entry into the temple .	.	.	"	11	.	.	.	.
The city moved. Ph. envy	"	10	"	<i>ib.</i>	.	.	"	19
Many sick healed . . .	"	14	.	.	.	.	.	.
Greeks wish to see Him	"	20
The voice from heaven	"	28
Went out to Bethany .	"	17	"	11

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EVENTS.	S. MATT.		S. MARK.		S. LUKE.		S. JOHN.	
	ch.	ver.	ch.	ver.	ch.	ver.	ch.	ver.
<i>Monday.</i>								
The fig-tree cursed . . .	21:	18	11:	12
Power of faith—Prayer	"	21	.	.	.	.	.	.
The Temple cleansed .	"	12	"	15	19:	45	.	.
Conspiracy against Him	"	13	"	18	"	47	.	.
Return to Bethany . .	.	.	"	19	.	.	.	.
<i>Tuesday.</i>								
Christ went to Jerusalem	.	.	"	20	.	.	.	.
The withered fig-tree .	.	.	"	20	.	.	.	.
By what authority? . .	"	23	"	27	20:	1	<i>Temple.</i>	
The father & the two sons	"	28	.	.	.	.	.	.
The vineyard let out .	"	33	12:	1	"	9	.	.
The wedding-garment .	22:	1	.	.	.	.	.	.
Pharisees send Herodians	"	16	"	13	.	.	.	.
Tribute to Cæsar . . .	"	15	"	13	"	20	.	.
Then come th' Sadducees	}	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Th' resurrect. (7 brethren)		"	23	"	18	"	27	.
Then Scribes & Pharisees	}	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
The great commandment	"	34	"	28	.	.	.	.
Whose son is Christ? &c.	"	41	"	35	"	41	.	.
Beware of the Scribes .	.	.	"	38	"	45	.	.
The widow's mite . .	.	.	"	41	21:	1	.	.
Last discourse to th' Jews	.	.	.	.	.	.	12: 37-50	
The eight woes . . .	ch. 23.	.	.	.	.	.	<i>Mt. of Olives.</i>	
Ye shall not see me hencef.	"	37	.	.	.	.
Fall of Jerusal. The end	24: 1-29	13: 1-24	"	5-25	.	.		
Wise and evil servants	"	45	.	.	.	.
The ten virgins . . .	25:	1	.	.	.	.
The talents	"	14	.	.	.	.
The sheep and goats .	"	31	.	.	.	.
Our Lord's last days .	.	.	.	.	"	37, 38		
<i>Wednesday.</i>								
Ch. foretells His betrayal	26:	1	.	.	.	.
The chief priests' counsel	"	3	14:	1	22:	1		
Judas's agreement . .	"	14	"	10	"	3		
<i>Thursday.</i>								
Prepa. for the last supper	"	17	"	12	22:	7		
He sat down with the 12	"	20	"	17	"	14		
The cup	"	17		

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EVENTS.	S. MATT.		S. MARK.		S. LUKE.		S. JOHN.	
	ch.	ver.	ch.	ver.	ch.	ver.	ch.	ver.
Wash'g th' disciples' feet	13:	1-17
The breaking of Bread. }	26:	26	14:	22	22:	19	(1Cor xi.	
<i>This is my Body</i> . . }	"	"	"	"	"	"	23, 24.)	
The betrayer foretold .	.	.	.	.	"	21	13:	18
<i>Lord, is it I?</i>	"	22-25	"	19	.	.	.	.
The sop. Judas went out	.	.	.	.	.	.	"	23-30
<i>Now is the Son of man glor</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	"	31
Peter's denial foretold .	.	.	.	.	.	.	"	36
The disciples' contention	.	.	.	.	"	24	.	.
Peter warned (the sword)	.	.	.	.	"	31, 35	.	.
The giving of the cup .	"	27	"	23	"	20	(1Cor xi.	
<i>This is My Blood, of</i> .	"	28	"	24	.	.	25.)	
<i>This is the N.T. in, &c.</i>	.	.	.	.	"	20	<i>ib.</i>	
<i>After supper.</i>								
Jesus discourses . . .	.	.	.	.	.	.	ch.14-16	
<i>Let not your heart</i> . .	.	.	.	.	.	.	14:	1
<i>If ye love Me</i> . . . .	.	.	.	.	.	.	"	15
The Comforter. . . .	.	.	.	.	.	.	"	16
The true Vine . . . .	.	.	.	.	.	.	15:	1
<i>Love one another</i> . .	.	.	.	.	.	.	"	12
The world's hatred . .	.	.	.	.	.	.	"	18
Persecution . . . .	.	.	.	.	.	.	16:	1
The Spirit of truth . .	.	.	.	.	.	.	"	7
Prayer in Christ's name	.	.	.	.	.	.	"	23
His prayer for all His disc.	.	.	.	.	.	.	17:	1-26
The hymn	"	30	"	26	.	.	.	.
<i>Garden of Gethsemane.</i>								
<i>All ye shall be offended</i> .	"	31	"	29	"	39	18:	1
<i>I will go before you</i> . .	"	32	"	28	.	.	<i>On the way. Peter, James, & John.</i>	
Jesu's agony	"	37	"	33	.	.		
His prayer	"	39	"	36	"	42		
The angel's succour. .	.	.	.	.	"	43		
His sweat . . . . .	.	.	.	.	"	44	.	.
The disciples sleeping .	"	40	"	37	.	.	.	.
The 2d and 3d prayer .	"	42, 44	"	39	.	.	.	.
Enternot into temptation	"	40	.	.
They still sleep . . .	"	45	"	41
He goes to the rest . .	"	<i>ib.</i>	.	.	"	45	.	.
Judas meets Him . . .	"	47	"	43	"	47	18:	2

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EVENTS.	S. MATT.		S. MARK.		S. LUKE.		S. JOHN.	
	ch.	ver.	ch.	ver.	ch.	ver.	ch.	ver.
<i>Whom seek ye?</i>	18:	4
The traitor's kiss . . .	26:	48	14:	44	22:	47	.	.
Peter with the sword . .	"	51	"	47	"	50	"	10
Christ healed Malchus . .	.	.	.	.	"	51	.	.
— rebuked Peter . . .	"	52	.	.	.	.	"	11
— spake to the people . .	"	55	"	48	"	52	.	.
— forsak'n by disciples . .	"	56	"	50	.	.	.	.
— led to Annas . . .	.	.	.	.	.	.	"	12
— before Caiaphas . . .	"	57	"	53	"	54	"	15
Peter and John follow . .	"	58	"	54	"	55	"	<i>ib.</i>
False witnesses examin'd .	"	59	"	56	.	.	.	.
" Art Thou the Christ?" .	"	63	"	61	.	.	.	.
Christ condemned . . .	"	66	"	64	.	.	.	.
— buffeted, mocked . . .	"	67	"	65	"	63, 65	.	.
Denied thrice by Peter . .	"	69	"	66	"	55-59	17, 25, 27	
<i>Friday morning.</i>								
The last examination . .	.	.	.	.	"	66	.	.
Christ led to Pilate . . .	27:	1	15:	1	23:	1	"	28
Judas repented . . .	"	3	.	.	.	.	.	.
Pilate came out . . .	.	.	.	.	.	.	"	"
— spoke priva. to Jesus . .	.	.	.	.	.	.	"	33
— tried to release Him . .	.	.	.	.	.	.	"	39
— scourged Him . . .	"	26	"	15	.	.	19:	1
The crown of thorns . . .	"	29	"	17	.	.	"	2
" Behold the man" . . .	.	.	.	.	.	.	"	5
The judgment-seat . . .	.	.	.	.	.	.	"	13
Christ officially accused .	"	11	"	2	"	2	.	.
Pilate intercedes again . .	.	.	.	.	"	4	.	.
Sends Him to Herod . . .	.	.	.	.	"	6	.	.
Who mocked Him and . . .	.	.	.	.	"	11	.	.
sends Him back . . .	.	.	.	.	"	"	.	.
" Behold your king" . . .	.	.	.	.	.	.	"	14
Pilate intercedes again . .	"	15	"	6	"	17	.	.
Pilate's wife's message . .	"	19	.	.	.	.	.	.
Barabbas chosen . . .	"	21	.	.	"	18	.	.
" Crucify Him" . . .	"	22	"	13	"	21	.	.
" His blood be upon us" . .	"	25	.	.	.	.	.	.
Jesus delivered up . . .	"	26	"	15	"	25	"	16
The purple robe, &c. . .	"	28	"	17	.	.	.	.
Spit upon and smitten . .	"	30	"	19	.	.	.	.
Led to be crucified . . .	"	31	"	20	.	.	"	16

HARMONY OF THE GOSPELS.

EVENTS.	S. MATT.		S. MARK.		S. LUKE.		S. JOHN.	
	ch.	ver.	ch.	ver.	ch.	ver.	ch.	ver.
Simon of Cyrene . . .	27:	32	15:	21	23:	26	.	.
<i>Weep not for Me</i> . . .	.	.	.	.	"	28	.	.
He, bearing His cross, came to Golgotha . .	"	33	"	22	"	33	19:	17
The vinegar and gall .	"	34	"	23	"	36	"	"
<i>The Cross.</i>								
The Mother of Jesus— S. John — Magdalene — Mary, and others.— <i>S. John</i> xix. 25.								
Nailed to the cross . .	"	35	.	.	"	33	"	18
<i>Father, forgive them.</i> . .	.	.	.	.	"	34	.	.
The superscription . .	"	(37)	"	(26)	"	38	"	19
His garments parted . .	"	35	"	24	"	23	.	.
Lots cast for His vesture	"	(ib.)	"	(ib.)	"	34	"	23
The passers-by rail . .	"	39	"	29	"	35	.	.
Both the thieves revile.	"	44	"	32	.	.	.	.
One reviles again . . .	.	.	.	.	"	39	.	.
One repents . . . . .	.	.	.	.	"	40	.	.
<i>To day shalt thou be.</i> . .	.	.	.	.	"	43	.	.
<i>Woman, behold thy Son.</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	"	26
<i>Behold thy mother</i> . . .	.	.	.	.	.	.	"	27
"The darkness"	"	45	"	33	"	44	.	.
<i>My God, My God, why.</i>	"	46	"	34	.	.	.	.
<i>I thirst</i> . . . . .	.	.	.	.	.	.	"	28
The vinegar	"	48	"	36	.	.	"	29
<i>It is finished</i> . . . . .	.	.	.	.	.	.	"	30
<i>Father, into Thine hands</i>	.	.	.	.	"	46	.	.
The veil of the Temple.	"	51	"	38	"	45	.	.
The graves opened . . .	"	52	.	.	.	.	.	.
The centurion	"	54	"	39	"	47	.	.
The women	"	55	"	40	"	49	.	.
Jesus pierced . . . . .	.	.	.	.	.	.	"	31
<i>The Sepulchre and Saturday</i>								
Th' descent from th' cross	"	57	"	42	"	50	"	38
Joseph of Arimathea . .	"	57	"	43	"	50	"	38
Nicodemus	"	.	"	.	"	.	"	39
Christ entombed	"	60	"	46	"	53	"	42
They rest the Sabbath .	.	.	.	.	"	56	.	.

HARMONY OF THE GOSPELS.

EVENTS.	S. MATT.		S. MARK.		S. LUKE.		S. JOHN.	
	ch.	ver.	ch.	ver.	ch.	ver.	ch.	ver.
The guard set	27:	62	.	.	.	.	.	.
Spices bought . . . .	.	.	16:	1	.	.	.	.
14. <i>Easter and the great forty days.</i>	<i>Desc. to hell.</i>		.	.	(1 Pet. iii. 19.)		.	.
M. Mag. & the oth. set out	28:	1	"	2	.	.	.	.
The angel had removed the stone	"	2	.	.	.	.	.	.
The guards fled	"	4	.	.	.	.	.	.
HE IS RISEN	"	6	"	6	.	.	.	.
They enter in [the disc.	.	.	"	5	.	.	.	.
The women go and tell	"	8	.	.	.	.	.	.
Guards go to Chief Priests	(11-15)		.	.	.	.	.	.
Another party of women	.	.	.	.	24:	1	.	.
Mary Magdalen tells Pet'r	.	.	.	.	"	10	20:	1, 2
Peter & John go to th'sep.	.	.	.	.	"	12	"	3
The two angels and Mary	.	.	.	.	.	.	"	11
Jesus seen by M. Magdal.	.	.	"	9	.	.	"	14
By the women	"	9	.	.	.	.	.	.
"All hail!"— <i>Fear not</i> .	"	10	.	.	.	.	.	.
<i>Touch Me not</i> . . . .	.	.	.	.	.	.	"	17
By Cleopas and another	.	.	"	12	"	13	.	.
The breaking of bread .	<i>Emmaus.</i>		.	.	" 28-30		.	.
They tell the apostles .	.	.	"	13	"	33	<i>Jerusal.</i>	
3d manifesta. to S. Peter	.	(1	Cor. xv.	5.)	"	34	.	.
By the 11 except Thomas	.	.	.	.	"	36	20:	19
<i>Peace be unto you</i> . . .	.	.	.	.	"	<i>ib.</i>	"	"
<i>As, &c., so send I you</i> .	.	.	.	.	.	.	"	21
<i>Whose, &c. ye remit</i> . .	.	.	.	.	.	.	"	23
By Thomas and the rest	1 Cor. xv	16:	14	.	.	.	"	26
By 500 brethren	"	16	1 Cor. xv	.	<i>Galilee.</i>		.	.
At the sea of Tiberias .	.	.	.	.	.	.	21:	1-24
<i>Fed My Lambs</i> . . . .	.	.	.	.	.	.	"	15
"What sh. this man do?"	.	.	.	.	.	.	"	20
By S. James . . . .	.	.	1 Cor. xv	.	.	.	.	.
By the apostles at . . .	<i>Jerusal.</i>		.	.	"	44	<i>Acts i. 4.</i>	
His last instructions .	.	.	.	.	"	45	.	.
Promise of the Spirit .	.	.	.	.	.	.	<i>ib. 5.</i>	
<i>All power, &c.</i>	28:	18	.	.	.	.	.	.
<i>Go ye into all nations</i> .	"	19	.	.	.	.	.	.
Salvation to the faithful	.	.	16:	16	.	.	.	.

HARMONY OF THE GOSPELS.

EVENTS.	S. MATT.		S. MARK.		S. LUKE.		S. JOHN.	
	ch.	ver.	ch.	ver.	ch.	ver.	ch.	ver.
Miraculous powers	16 :	17	.	.	.	.
<i>Lo, I am with you alway</i>	28 :	19	.	.	.	.	.	.
He blessed them	24 :	50	.	.
Was parted from them.	.	.	Acts i. 9.		.	.	.	.
Received into heaven .	.	.	16 :	19	.	.	.	.
They worshipped Him.	"	52	.	.

Many other signs truly did Jesus (*S. John. xx. 30*), which are not written (*xxi. 25*). These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name.

Who sitteth on the right hand of God,
Maketh intercession for us (*Rom. viii. 34*);
Shall in like manner come again (*Acts i. 10*),
And all His saints with Him (*Zech. xiv. 5*),
To judge the world (*2 Tim. iv. 1*).

EVEN SO, COME,
LORD JESUS.
(*Rev. xxii. 20.*)

ALMIGHTY GOD, who hast given Thine only Son to be unto us both a sacrifice for sin, and also an ensample of godly life, give us grace that we may always most thankfully receive that His inestimable benefit, and also daily endeavour ourselves to follow the blessed steps of His most holy life; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

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